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THE
BAMPTON LECTURES
FOR M.DCCC.LXVII

RIVINGTONS

LONDON	...	...	...	<i>Waterloo Place</i>
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THE DOGMATIC FAITH

An Inquiry into the Relation subsisting between
Revelation and Dogma

IN EIGHT LECTURES PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD IN THE YEAR 1867

ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M.A.
CANON OF SALISBURY

BY EDWARD GARBETT, M.A.
INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, SURBITON

RIVINGTONS
London, Oxford, and Cambridge

1867



A.85229

1911

EXTRACT
FROM THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON.
CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the
“ Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of
“ Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the
“ said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the intents and
“ purposes hereinafter mentioned ; that is to say, I will and
“ appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ox-
“ ford for the time being shall take and receive all the rents,
“ issues, and profits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations,
“ and necessary deductions made) that he pay all the re-
“ mainder to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Ser-
“ mons, to be established for ever in the said University, and
“ to be performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in
“ Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the Heads
“ of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room adjoining
“ to the Printing-House, between the hours of ten in the
“ morning and two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
“ Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in
“ Oxford, between the commencement of the last month in
“ Lent Term, and the end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following Subjects—to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within two months after they are preached ; and one copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of every College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bodleian Library ; and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons ; and the Preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge ; and that the same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

P R E F A C E

IN preparing these Lectures for the press, it has been my object to reduce the notes to as narrow a compass as possible. I have therefore abstained from the use of matter simply illustrative, and have only given references where the facts relied upon in the body of the Lectures or the arguments advanced were likely to be called into question, and therefore needed to be strengthened by corroborative testimony. I am conscious of many faults in execution and defects of detail throughout the volume. But I appeal for an indulgent criticism on the ground that the last twenty-seven years of my life have been incessantly occupied by the duties of a laborious ministry, and that these Lectures have been prepared under the pressure of deep domestic affliction, and amid the constant distractions of parochial work.

CHRIST CHURCH PARSONAGE, SURBITON.

October 8th, 1867.

A

LECTURE I

THE FAITH AND THE CHURCH

JUDE 3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

THESE words sound like the battle-cry of the Church, the trumpet-note of the Spirit of God summoning her to the conflict. They appeal to the heroic virtues of constancy of purpose, fortitude, and courage. No childish uncertainty of conviction or womanly weakness of purpose must characterise the "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Many of the highest qualities of manhood are taxed by war, and by none should they be so illustriously displayed as by the saint who has attained unto "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Such was the appeal of St. Paul to his Corinthian converts: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

The need for manly vigour is not diminished by the fact that the sphere of conflict is spiritual, not material. The shock of outward battle calls into play the excitement of the physical spirits and the combativeness natural to man. It has about it a terrible pomp of its own, and an outward display singularly attractive to some minds, and only intensified into a sterner reality by its dreadful accompaniments of suffering and death. The spiritual war taxes constancy and courage the more from the absence of these outward stimulants. To stand firm to principle amid reproach, steadily to separate abiding truth from its temporary counterfeits, to resist ridicule and the strength of language often substituted for strength of argument, to throw on one side accusations of narrowness and ignorance, irritating as they are to a just self-respect, to rise superior to periodic fluctuations of opinion as ceaseless as the ebb and flow of the sea, and amid these various influences to maintain with singleness of heart and undistracted accuracy of eye the truth of God, is the most difficult of all conflicts and the most glorious of all victories.

The exact nature of the conflict implied in St. Jude's words must be carefully discriminated. They do not refer to the triumph of the martyr, dauntless amid danger and triumphant over death. To this trial the saints were called during the stroke of the ten fiery persecutions of primitive times. No more heroic epoch has ever occurred in human history. It is perhaps well for the Church that

our knowledge of the detailed events of these centuries is scanty and imperfect. Had each individual martyr stood forth from the past distinctly portrayed in all the particulars of his suffering and his triumph, there would have been danger of a Christian hero-worship. These figures of the ancient saints would have stood between us and the company of the inspired Apostles, and have obscured to our view the august figure of the Saviour, as amid them and above them all He towers, single and alone, "in all things having the pre-eminence." We know that the Church passed through these tempests and triumphed over them. The glimpses we catch of the history of the martyrs illustrate to us their lofty confidence in God and their intense sight of the Unseen. There is, for instance, something wonderfully striking in the joy with which Ignatius appears to dwell upon his approaching agonies from the lions in the Roman amphitheatre. He saw in them but a brief and bloody entrance into Heaven, true disciple of the Master who in dying destroyed death, and on His cross "spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it."

But it is evident from the context that St. Jude looked beyond these outward persecutions to something further. His entire Epistle does not contain a word expressive of the expectation of outward persecution. His warning is against men within the pale of the Church herself, "crept in unawares." He specifies the instruments of their warfare against the truth as twofold: immoral laxity of practice

“turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,” springing out of doctrinal unfaithfulness as out of its natural root, “denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The words are re-echoed in the language of 2 St. Peter ii. 1. If the conjecture of modern criticism be correct that St. Jude wrote earlier of the two, and that St. Peter composed his second letter after seeing Jude’s Epistle and with a reference to it, the language of the Apostle of the Circumcision supplies an inspired enlargement of Jude’s inspired description. “There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them.” If these false teachers were steadily opposed, it was probable that they would break off from “the Catholic Church,” (as the orthodox believers were early called to distinguish them from heretics,) and would form parties of their own. This result St. Jude foresaw. “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” The warning was not addressed therefore against avowed enemies without, but against secret enemies within the Church, and the conflict intended is not a struggle of endurance against heathen violence, but of firm adherence to truth against doctrinal error. The evil already worked in Jude’s days, but it reached its full development only in later times. For a period the process was mercifully checked by the pressure of outward violence: centuries of persecution elapsed before the battle of the Church took its permanent direction.

Those who believe in the providence of her great Head over the fortunes of the Church and delight to trace its actings, illustrated by the facts of the past as by the finger of God Himself, will adore the over-ruling wisdom manifested in this order. It is of the utmost importance to us to be able to identify the pure teaching of the Scriptures with the belief of the earliest ages of Christianity. In tracing our own doctrinal genealogy back to the pure fountain of "God's word written," the faith of the first three centuries is a vital link of the process. Had not their witness survived, the Church of our own days might have been charged with putting a meaning upon the sacred records never assigned to them by the ages living nearest to the time of their composition. For this apologetic reason the Church of England has ever placed the highest importance on the doctrinal identity existing between our own standards and the faith of the primitive ages.

But we can trace an object even beyond this in the providential order of things. The persecutions of the earlier ages were disciplinary and preparative to the controversies of the ages subsequent. There can, I think, be no doubt that a conflict of truth against error is more difficult and crucial than a conflict of Christian steadfastness against persecution, in exact proportion as it is more subtle and less palpable. The elements entering into the acceptance and maintenance of truth are very complicated. They lie in the intellectual as well as

the moral sphere of human action. They afford room, as the other conflict does not, for honest question and sincere hesitation. The man challenged either to curse the Saviour or to endure for His sake, could not possibly doubt the nature of the issue submitted to him. But the man called to discriminate between the true teaching of dead Apostles and the false glosses of living heresiarchs, has a much more difficult problem to solve. The conflict no longer appeals to the obvious claims of duty, but reaching into the inner sphere of conviction shakes faith on its first and lowest foundations. The struggle is not less really a struggle, and does not for this appeal less urgently to manly fortitude and courage, but rather tasks them to a nobler exercise and carries them into a higher sphere.

It pleased God that the lesser trial should exhaust its strength against the Church first, and the higher conflict was for a while restrained. How the force of violence without would naturally check the progress of doctrinal corruption within the Church, simply by excluding insincere and unspiritual members, is too clear to need illustration. The providence of our Master gave time to rear the Church into manhood, and to mature her confidence by trial, before He let loose the more dangerous elements of error. Thus when the time came to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," as for life and death, the saints of the later period could draw strength from the example

of their sainted predecessors. They could strengthen their zeal by the recollection that on behalf of this very faith the noble army of the martyrs in other days had bled and conquered. Should they prove false to their charge and treacherously betray the trust for which the saints of other days had witnessed unto death?

The more closely we examine St. Jude's teaching the more clearly shall we see it to convey this view of the Church's conflict. The text contains four distinct assertions.

I It asserts the existence of an organised and formal body of truth under the title of "the faith"—not *fides quâ creditur*, but *fides quæ creditur*—not the act of believing, but that which is believed. The whole text and context so imperatively fix this meaning on the word, as to admit of little dispute. That which was delivered to the saints, and for which they were to contend against false disciples, could not be the quality of belief; nor could it be the revealed necessity for this moral quality, since St. Jude is not explaining the doctrine of faith, as St. Paul in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and St. James in the second chapter of his Epistle. It remains, therefore, that the word expresses the truth believed, and in this sense the general consent of criticism may be said to accept it[1]. In the New Testament usage of the word 'faith' two stages may be traced. Throughout the Gospels it is used solely in its subjective sense, in that meaning of trust or reliance which the word

had acquired in the Old Testament Scriptures ; but in the Acts of the Apostles it gradually assumes an objective sense. Three classes of passages occur. In one class it is used with the article in contexts where it can only be understood of the act of faith in the believer ; in another class of passages its objective meaning is equally clear ; while in a third class of passages the word may bear either meaning ; rather, perhaps, the two meanings are so combined together that it is impossible to say with certainty which of the two ideas was most prominent in the mind of the writer [2].

Now this use of the word in a subjective sense alone during the lifetime of our Lord, and its use in an objective sense likewise after our Lord's ascension into heaven, are wholly congruous with the circumstances. For Christ Himself is the centre and heart of Christianity. Union with a Divine living Person, and not adherence to a dead creed, however great and noble, is the essence of the Gospel. This is true now, as it was true during the term of Christ's personal ministry. But there is this difference. While our Lord was upon earth He was Himself the Gospel, for He was visibly present, and could be seen by men's eyes, and heard by their ears, and touched by their hands, before He was revealed to their hearts as the object of trust and adoring affection. Nothing else was needed to stand between the soul and Him, or to make Him known to men, but Himself. Accordingly during this period His Gospel was not extended beyond

the possible sphere of His personal presence. No attempt was made to gather converts from a wider circle than could be reached by His own ministry. The missionary journeys of the Twelve and of the Seventy did not extend beyond the cities of Israel. During this period He was presented to men immediately, and faith was the act of trust in His office and affection to His person.

But after our Lord's death this was changed. He was no longer visibly present upon earth, and could no longer be known immediately. Present He still was with His Church, in fulfilment of the perpetual promise, "Lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," but His presence was spiritual, not corporeal,—invisible, not visible. Before men could believe in Him they needed to know Him ; but as they could no longer come into His corporal presence they could only know Him by knowing about Him. They knew Him no longer immediately by eye and ear and hand, but mediately through the preaching of truths relative to Him and to His office and work as Prophet, Priest, and King. These truths were the medium of their knowing Himself. They were, so to speak, the atmosphere through means of which the Sun of Righteousness Himself might shine upon the hearts and consciences of mankind. By a simple and easy transition, the idea of trust and reliance upon Christ came also to involve the truths without which knowledge, and therefore trust, would have been impossible.

Here, therefore, is the true solution of the difficulty

presented by the palpable difference between the preaching of our Lord and that of His Apostles. Undoubtedly our Lord did not teach doctrine in the sense that the Apostles taught it. He presented Himself to mankind and claimed their allegiance. But it is totally to misapprehend the Divine order to say that our Lord adopted attachment to Himself as the mark of discipleship in opposition to acceptance of doctrinal truths. He claims attachment to Himself now that He is in heaven exalted to the right hand of the Father, as much as He claimed it while still upon earth and hiding beneath the veil of the flesh the lustre of His Deity. Doctrines are so far from standing in opposition to this personal attachment to Himself, that it is only through means of doctrine that it can conceivably be acquired. We cannot love what we do not know. And as we do not live during His earthly ministry and cannot watch Him with our eyes as He accomplished the mysteries of His life and death, resurrection and ascension, we can only know Him through His revelation of Himself by the mouths of His inspired Apostles.

Now all these truths are gathered round His person and work. They either reveal what He did during His life on earth, or what He is doing now in heaven, or what He will do when He comes again to judgment. As He is one, so the truths making Him known to us are one also ; one in that organic and structural unity which pervades them as consistent members of a completed body. Hence they

are capable of being described together, and constitute "the faith" once delivered to the saints.

II It asserts that this body of truth is complete, and admits neither of change nor of addition. It is a faith "once" delivered, and admitting of no repetition. Bengel's words again echo the sentence of modern criticism: "*Particula valde urgens; Nulla alia dabitur fides.*" The word is used emphatically for a single act. St. Paul employs it in the assertion, "once was I stoned." It is the word employed with earnest reiteration in the Epistle to the Hebrews to express the singleness of the offering of Christ, in contrast to the oft-repeated sacrifices of the Mosaic priesthood. The sacred writer illustrates this singleness by the singleness of death: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, so Christ was once offered." But while the word implies an act completed and not admitting of repetition, it does not imply that the act itself was necessarily done all at once, and not slowly and by degrees. Thus St. Paul employs it for the work of grace: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened." Where it does not enter into the Apostle's purpose to assert whether the enlightenment was wrought all at once as with St. Paul, or by degrees as with the Ethiopian Eunuch, but only that when accomplished it admits of no repetition. Thus the faith was delivered to the saints not in one act but in many, by a succession of inspired writers at very different periods of the world. But once completed it was for ever completed—

ἀπαξ, once for all. If the conjecture of modern criticism be correct that the Epistle of St. Jude was written at the latest verge of the apostolic age, the last of all the Apostolic Epistles with the sole exception of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, then the faith was already complete when he wrote. For neither of these two Epistles deal formally with doctrines, except the doctrines of the inspiration of the Scriptures and of the second coming of Christ. They may therefore be regarded as Divine seals put by the Spirit on the authenticity and authority of all that had gone before.

III It asserts the authority due to the faith to be the authority of God. It was once *delivered*. The sacred writer does not indeed specify by whom it was delivered, but the language scarcely admits of doubt. For the word “delivered” is a word of authority, and implies a trust committed by a superior to an inferior [3]. It is certain, moreover, that the person delivering the faith and the persons to whom it was delivered cannot be the same. It was delivered “to the saints,”—where the very width of the word includes the entire company of the redeemed. The Apostles themselves were therefore receivers, not givers. Thus our Lord, in His wonderful prayer recorded in John xvii, declared, “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me ^a.” The great Apostle, called after the rest as one born out of due time, asserts his own knowledge of the Gospel to have been the result of an immediate revelation.

^a John xvii. 8.

“I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ^b.” The faith is no discovery of man, no flash of light from the intuitions, no development of human sentiment, but a solemn charge entrusted to the saints, characterised by the immutability and invested with the authority of the Deity from whom it comes. It was given through the instrumentality of men, whence the Apostle spoke of the “tradition received of us^c,” but the author of the trust, and He who will demand an account of the stewardship, is God.

IV Lastly, the text specifies the trustees—“the saints.” There is no exclusive or sectional meaning about the word. It reaches to the whole company of the people of God. But the people of God are not a loose mass of unorganised units. It has pleased the Holy One to frame them into a Church, with a visible order and polity. By virtue of the Word of God she preaches and the Sacraments she administers, by her doctrinal creeds and public services and Divinely-appointed ministry, she discharges her office as “the pillar and ground of the truth^d,” or, as our own Church expresses it, the “witness and keeper of Holy Writ^e.” Who should so fitly maintain and defend the faith as those who have solemnly sworn before God and the Church to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word, and have moreover stated

^b Gal. i. 12.

^c 2 Thess. iii. 6.

^d 1 Tim. iii. 15.

^e Art. XX.

their solemn belief that they are truly called to this work "according to the will of our Lord Jesus" and by the inward motions of "the Holy Ghost?" Who should stand forward as the leaders among the saints but they who in every act of their sacred office perpetually reiterate that unfeigned belief in all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which was the condition of their admission into holy orders? But while God's ministers are called to stand foremost in the conflict, it is in their character of representatives and servants of the Church, not as lords over God's heritage. Not to them alone has the faith been entrusted, but to the Church at large. It is the inalienable birth-right of every Christian man. Each and all alike have their share equally in the responsibility and in the glory of its maintenance. The nature of the trusteeship suggests at once the occasion of the danger (for had there been no human agency employed in the delivery and preservation of the faith, there would have been no room for scepticism) and the motive for overcoming it. The faith was once delivered "to the saints."

These four particulars meet in one general proposition. They involve the existence of a consistent body of truth, doctrinal and practical, necessary to make men "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is "a faith" not in contrast with reason, but with sight and sense, since it reveals truths with which sight and sense cannot make us acquainted. It is a complete faith, admitting neither

of addition nor of diminution, for it was given "once for all." It is invested with a Divine authority, inasmuch as it is no creation of the human intellect or expression of the human sentiment, but a revelation from God, "delivered," not discovered, and therefore changeless as the God from whom it comes. Its preservation in purity and integrity is the test of faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the Church; the means of her moral trial and discipline, at once her inalienable inheritance and the crown of her glory. It is invested with the attributes of the Giver,—unity, perfection, immutability.

This is the teaching of Scripture. It is not my present object to plead that the statement is true because it is scriptural. Such indeed is my deep conviction, in common with the long line of the saints and fathers of the Church. No epithet is applied more frequently to the Scriptures by the great writers alike of the Primitive and of the Reformation periods than the epithet "infallible," and in such illustrious company no person need be ashamed to profess his belief in this attribute of the Word. But my present argument will be addressed to those who deny the inspiration of the Bible, and to them an appeal to its authority is inapplicable. Few topics occur with greater frequency in what a Dutch divine ostentatiously calls "the theology of the nineteenth century" than the contemptuous rejection of the dogma of Scriptural infallibility. There are many degrees of rejection. Some only reject the inspiration of its historical

portions, and accept the inspiration of its doctrinal teaching: a distinction intelligible, however far it may fall short of being reasonable or may fail to accord with the facts of the case [4]. Some reject the inspired authority of the Book altogether, but accept its pure and lofty morality, not because it is found in the Bible, but because it commends itself to their own consciousness. This also is intelligible, however much such a foundation for faith may prove to be a quicksand entirely inadequate to support the superstructure reared upon it [5]. Others accept only the portraiture of our blessed Master, the alone "perfect ideal" known to man. This, again, is intelligible, inconsistent although it be with a rejection of dogmatic Christianity, for once given the character of Christ, from that premise may be proved step by step the entire structure of the faith [6]. Others, lastly, take a step further in subtle distinction, and while professing still to accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, place its divinity not in the infallible accuracy of its statements, nor in the sublimity of its doctrines, but in "the spirit and the life which breathe in the written words" as contrasted with the mere flesh or letter of the words themselves [7]. This view appears to me not less unintelligible than it is unreasonable: for it denies, one by one, alike the facts and the doctrines of the Bible, and yet professes to accept an impalpable and indefinable something termed "its spirit and life." In other words, it regards the contents of Scripture as human error, and Scripture

itself as an inextricable mass of mythical tradition. Yet this mass of imposture is asserted to have a spirit and life that are divine, a contradictory mysticism about as reasonable as it would be to recognise the sweet breath of fresh roses in the effluvia of a corpse. These varieties of opinion need to be borne in mind, but their refutation does not enter into the formal and direct purpose of this series of Lectures.

I do not therefore affirm the existence of such an authoritative faith as I have described to be certainly a fact, but for the present only affirm that it is the indisputable teaching of Scripture. Now supposing this teaching to be true, such a faith as it describes must necessarily be dogmatic. For "dogma" is only another word for a positive truth, positively asserted in contrast to an opinion, a conjecture, or a speculation. It is a proposition regarded as so certainly true, as to be presented for acceptance but not for discussion. This is the historical meaning of the word, both in its Pagan and its Christian usage. In the Pagan philosophy it was the descriptive term for that great school of thought which maintained the reality of the knowledge acquired by the right use of the intellectual faculties, in distinction to the negations of the sceptics and the speculations of the mystics. In Christian philosophy it expresses the theology based on the authority of Scripture and the judgment of the Fathers. Dogma expresses a settled and certain truth, an attained resting-place for belief, from which,

as from the axioms of mathematical science, we may confidently argue.

In this sense the faith once delivered to the saints is necessarily dogmatic, by virtue of each and all of the four assertions shown to be contained in St. Jude's words. The structural unity of the faith and the nature of its subject-matter, its completeness, the Divine authority with which it is invested, and the responsibility of the trusteeship of the saints, are the four seals to this title-deed. What God teaches must necessarily have the authority of a command. It was the opinion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact, that the doctrines of the Gospel are described in Scripture under this term, and the opinion is shared by many critics of later times [8]. But the ideas of stability, certainty, and authority conveyed by "dogma" are confirmed the more, if in all the five places where the word occurs in the New Testament it is understood in that sense of command or decree which it undoubtedly bears in three of them [9]. That early in the history of Christianity the word 'dogma' was employed as a distinctive description of the faith at large is certain. Christians were called *οἱ τοῦ δόγματος*, men of the faith; and the Emperor Aurelian, in his rescript against Paul of Samosata, designates the bishops of Italy as *ἐπίσκοποι τοῦ δόγματος*, bishops of the Faith [10]. What has the stamp of certain truth is necessarily dogmatic. That is dogma, and that alone truly dogma, upon which has been set the seal of the Divine infallibility.

But a further idea has become associated with the term, and we need to be on our guard lest we confound it with the other. Dogmatism has become a term of reproach, and, in our modern sense of the word, rightly. We express by it the habit of mind which in an over-confidence on its own individual powers is disposed to depreciate the judgment of other men, and to assert personal opinions with confident arrogance as certainly and indisputably true. Thus employed, the word bears a very different meaning to the *δογματίζω* and *δογματικὸς* of classic usage, for it expresses, not a mode of thought, but a moral disposition. But the tone of authority, consistent and necessary in the infallible, is inconsistent and offensive in the fallible, because by using it the fallible disavows his fallibility. Positiveness of statement is as congruous with what is divine as it is incongruous with what is human. A settled and positive truth must necessarily be stated in words sharply defined and trenchant, because if it were otherwise the vagueness and uncertainty of the expressions would attach vagueness and uncertainty to the thing expressed. But in matters of human opinion the errability of the speaker suggests modest qualification in the words he uses. The dogmatical temper is an assumption of superiority on the part of one man over other men, such as Job rebuked: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you^f." It is justly offensive, and if modern thought

^f Job xii. 2.

only protested against this dogmatical temper, every candid and honest thinker would sympathise with the protest.

I therefore employ the word dogma for a revealed truth, and for ecclesiastical formulas so far, and so far only, as they truly express the mind of God in His Word. It is a condition arising from the delivery of the faith into the charge of the saints that the formulating of its truths for the convenience of instruction and defence is necessarily a human work. Nor will any deny the abstract possibility of human error in the process. If it can be proved to exist, we are bound by our own principles to give up what ceases to be dogmatic as soon as it is proved to be a human misconception or misstatement of the Divinely-given faith. It would be treachery alike to ourselves and to our Master to shrink from making the examination, and making it over and over again, as the exigencies of controversy call attention to one particular dogma or to another.

But the undogmatic spirit of our day does not rest on any allegation of inaccuracy in the process of formulating truth, but on objections against the existence and certainty of the truth itself. Not against this dogma or that, but against all and every dogma, against dogma at all, is the attack directed. In this relation dogma means dogmatic theology, a system of definite propositions concerning God and man and the relation between the two, gathered out of the Scriptures and resting

upon them for its ultimate authority. Human language scarcely supplies terms of condemnation stronger or more sweeping than have been applied to this dogmatic teaching. It is declared to be no part of religion, but the unsightly incrustation of ignorance, superstition, and fraud upon the pure belief and natural worship of mankind. Religion is admitted to be Divine; but theology is asserted to be human,—human not alone in its technical form, upon which there is no dispute, but in its substance, in the truths it professes to teach and the authority on which it professes to teach them. It is contemptuously described as the result of men's ignorance of natural science, and their consequent disposition to explain the natural by the supernatural. In this relation the records of the faith are conceived to stand on exactly the same ground as a scientific work of two thousand years ago would stand, accurately expressing the belief of that time, but wholly useless and obsolete amid the advancing science of our own days. At other times it is described as being the creation of the Christian Fathers, or as framed by the definitions of the Schoolmen, or even as the product of the sixteenth century. Nay, stronger language yet has been used. As if it were not sufficient to attribute to it the weakness of a human origin, dogmatic theology is declared to be a creation of Satan himself, an immense delusion on the credulity of mankind. As the climax of all, to protest against dogma and resist it in every way is affirmed to be the

most religious of all religious acts, and a prime obligation of Christianity itself [11].

Thus the language of the sacred writers and the language of "the theology of the nineteenth century" stand in direct and irreconcilable opposition. They not only conflict in detail, but they embody two contradictory systems of thought. The whole conceptions on which they rest are different. From the first principle to the last conclusion they are wide asunder as the antipodes. The questions involved in this difference embrace all the mysteries of life and death, and are the most vital and important that can touch the human heart and exercise the human intellect. If modern thought be right, and all dogmatic teaching is an offence to the self-respect of man and an insult to the majesty of God, then it will not be enough to bring the teaching of our Church into closer conformity to its truths, but the teaching itself must be swept away altogether. For if there be no dogma because there is no certain truth, then no one form of religious belief ought to be taught more than another, because it cannot be true more than another. If, on the other hand, the Apostolic teaching be correct and the dogmatic faith is a revelation made by God to man, then the denial of it must be among the greatest of sins, and a lack of zeal on the part of the Church in defending the trust committed to her among the most fatal of treacheries. In the one case the ancient pagans represented the highest advance of human wisdom, for they regarded,

as some men do in our own day, all special beliefs to be but fluctuations in the outward accidents of religion. Then Christianity was a retrogression, not an advancement in the progress of humanity, and our effort should be to get back as fast as possible to that ethical love of the good and the beautiful which constituted their highest advance upwards. In the other case "the revolution of Calvary" was the grandest epoch in the world's history, and the faith of Christ the rising of a Sun of Righteousness upon a race sick with its own miseries and sitting in the valley of the shadow of death.

Such are the alternatives presented to us, and the present course of Lectures will be devoted to their discussion. It is only possible to deal with arguments so Protean as those of modern rationalism by classifying them under certain heads corresponding with the agencies asserted to be operative in the production, progress, and results of Christianity, and said to eliminate the action of a Divinely-given and dogmatic faith. These may be reduced to six in number: the influence of a ministerial or priestly class, the force of a religious sentiment, the discoveries of the intuitional faculty, the conclusions of the speculative intellect, the accumulative power of a progressive civilisation, and the instincts of natural conscience. My argument will be directed to prove that the dogmatic faith is no creation of the Church; that it is not indebted for its influence to a natural sentiment of religion; that its truths are not the spontaneous discovery of the human mind; that its

dogmatic statements do not rest on the same basis as the results of a speculative philosophy; that it is not a mere passive result of a civilisation far advanced equally for good and evil; and, lastly, that it is not a subordinate instrument of instruction over which the natural conscience rules supreme, an all-sufficient and authoritative judge.

But the argument will have a positive and affirmative side likewise. In the second lecture I shall endeavour to prove that the Church of Christ bears unanimous testimony to the nature of her trusteeship, and refers the authority of her teaching to those sacred Scriptures of which she is the witness and keeper. Nor does this assertion stand alone, but is supported by the clear testimony of facts. For this authoritative and therefore dogmatic faith can be identified and traced backwards in unbroken continuity of descent to the first age of the Christian era.

The third lecture will be directed to shew that religion cannot survive without a creed, and never has survived without one. In its absence nothing remains under the name of religion but a dim, vague, and formless sentiment, totally incompetent to answer the questionings of the human heart and conscience, inadequate to restrain human passion, and impotent to correct human misery. It can neither live itself, nor can it give life. Dogmatic truth is the very soul and heart of religious sentiment, the spring alike of its reality and of its power.

The fourth lecture will carry this argument a step further, and prove that revealed Christianity can alone supply this creed. Religious belief rests on revelation only, and not on intuition. Not one solitary religious truth accepted by any school of opinion is to be found outside the circle of revealed dogma. In every case without exception, rationalism is distinguished from Christianity, not by what it teaches, but by what it denies. Hence if all revealed dogma were swept away, the entire religious belief of the world would be swept away with it, and we should not be in possession of one solitary ascertained fact relative to God and the world of the Unseen.

In the fifth lecture I shall seek to show the difference between the propositions of theological science and the systems of speculative philosophy. Speculation carries in its own professed principles and methods the inevitable seeds of its failure. Dogmatic theology works by a totally different process, and rests on that inductive method of reasoning to which physical science is indebted for its triumphs. The Divine truth embodied in ecclesiastical formulas is not deprived of its divinity by the human character of the definitions. By virtue of its Divine principle, dogma lives and works. In contrast to it, speculative philosophy is born to wither and die. Every successive school has started with some germ of truth, but has destroyed it by the refinements of its speculation, till philosophy itself, weary of failure, has found its climax

in proclaiming through the positivism of Comte its impotence and ignorance.

The sixth lecture will adjust the relations of Christianity and civilisation, and shew that revealed dogma can alone supply to civilisation the principle of an abiding life. The contrast between Pagan and Christian civilisation is pregnant with this lesson. The two were essentially different alike in duration and in character. Pagan civilisation grew old with the weight of its own evils; Christian civilisation has the elements of an eternal youth. The difference of duration is naturally explained by the difference of character. But all the distinctive characteristics of Christian civilisation are the result of dogmatic truths, and live or die with the dogmas out of which they grow.

In the seventh lecture I shall discuss the asserted supremacy of conscience over religious belief. The theories of conscience held in successive periods of moral philosophy will need to be considered. Within the bounds of the same rationalism will be found the assertion of the absolute supremacy of conscience on one side, conflicting with a denial of the very existence of the faculty upon the other. The fact is conclusive against the theory of an universal conscience and the infallibility of its conclusions. Supposing conscience to be an authoritative and sufficient guide wherever it is in a position to decide, yet in regard to Divine things it is not able to decide for want of the data requisite for a decision. Conscience is not only tainted by

human weakness, but infected by human corruption, and needs to be corrected by the fixed standard of the dogmatic faith before it is competent to discharge its natural function in the constitution of man.

The eighth lecture will be devoted to gathering up the threads of these arguments, drawing the general conclusion, and tracing its practical bearing upon the dangers, conflicts, and duties of our day.

For the fair consideration of these arguments all antecedent prejudice against dogmatic theology should be discarded. It is very difficult to maintain exemption from the prevailing tendencies of thought. The current tone of literature is apt to produce an unconscious bias even in honest and independent thinkers. The rejection of dogma has itself become the common dogma of free thought, and may be considered the characteristic principle of writers who loudly claim to represent modern criticism and enquiry. The prevalence of this mode of thinking is however no proof of its reasonableness. If convicted of error, it will not be the first time by a great many that the common judgment of a class of thinkers, and even of an age, has proved to be in the wrong. The disdainful rejection of authoritative teaching should the less disturb the equanimity of a Christian, because it flows out of the social and intellectual developments of the day and the tendency of the age to lawless self-sufficiency. The temper of men's minds is eager,

restless, and impatient. A headlong rapidity of change is common to all departments of human thought, and it is no matter of surprise that religion should not be exempt from it. At a time when a decade of years exhibits more progress and alteration than a century at other periods, men are naturally tempted to forget the limitations of our human powers, and to claim progress and modification of belief in this as in all other directions. Nor is it difficult to trace the misapprehensions to which the prevalent prejudice against dogma may reasonably be ascribed.

Thus the assertion of dogmatic truth may be supposed to fetter the free action of the intellect. For dogma is founded on authority, and the intervention of authority implies a domain of truth inaccessible to the unassisted reason. Authority does not indeed limit the range of man's intellectual powers, but it does assert the existence of a limitation. It stands at the entrance of Divine knowledge like the cherubim with flaming swords at the gate of Paradise, and exclaims to human genius in its highest flight, "Hitherto canst thou come, but no further." This restriction offends the pride of reason, and reason, flushed with its triumphs, revolts against it. Yet it should be remembered that it is a very different thing to fix a limit and to assert the existence of a limit already fixed in the constitution of our nature. If there be a sphere of Divine knowledge lying above the reach of reason; if in this inability of reason God has been pleased to give

us revelation ; if the truths contained in this revelation, being given on Divine authority, have a dogmatic fixity about them admitting neither of change or modification ; if the province of reason is consequently confined to the evidences of a Divine revelation, and this being ascertained to exist, nothing is left but obedient acceptance,—it is best and wisest and noblest to recognise the fact. Truth is ever great, and it is ever great to know it. To square truth to our own preconceived notions and wishes is the sign of weakness ; to square our preconceived notions and wishes to truth, making the love of what is true the predominant affection over all others, is the sign of strength and of true nobility of mind.

Moreover, the self-sufficient impatience that frets at the restraints of dogmatic truth is in the highest degree unhealthy. No doubt it would be a glorious thing to be as God, filling all, searching all, and knowing all. But the trivial limitations of our power and knowledge inherent in the commonest transactions of daily life, warn us by how infinite a distance our narrow capacities are separated from the reach of the Infinite and Unconditioned. We do not move a limb or do an act, but there are involved in the motion and the action mysteries wholly beyond our solution. To a creature so circumstanced patient enquiry and a becoming humility diffident of itself are among the most necessary of graces. Petulant impatience disdainful of control, intolerant of contradiction, and contemptuously

neglectful of limitations, belongs rather to the fretfulness of an intellectual childhood than to the quiet self-respect and reverent love of truth characteristic of intellectual maturity. Not such has been the spirit of the great discoverers of nature's laws, of the men whose genius has unlocked her hidden secrets and laid open the marvels of the universe to wonder and to praise. These men have been without exception believers in the dogmatic faith [12]. And why? Because they learned to apprehend alike the weakness and the strength of man's intellect; to measure what he can do and what he cannot do. They have not in the pride of what is known lost sight of the immense world of the unknown, reaching within them and beyond them, around them and above them, mysterious and impenetrable.

Nor should we forget that if authoritative dogma places a limit upon reason, reason herself recognises and accepts the limit. The harsh coercion of authority is not to be confounded with the temperate self-restraint of the reason, taught to know itself and exercising a wise control over its own flight. It is an idle misapprehension to set faith in opposition to reason, or reason in opposition to faith. There can be no faith without an appeal to the reason, alike to apprehend the truths to be believed and to measure the evidence for believing them. If the faith be from God, reason places her seal of acceptance upon the authenticating proofs of its divinity. If this faith contains doctrine, such as the

nature of the Godhead and the union of the two natures in the person of our Lord, having heights and depths beyond our reach, reason witnesses that it must be thus, because a Deity wholly within the comprehension of the human mind could not be a Deity, but would be only an impersonation of man himself. At every step a dogmatic faith appeals to the reason, and the act of accepting the limits placed by it on speculative thought is no more than the act of adoring worship, in which the created intellect acknowledges the supremacy of the Uncreated.

Most certainly the complaint, that a dogmatic faith cramps the freedom of thought and narrows and confines the progress of human knowledge, is singularly at variance with the history of the past. Where will be found a succession of nobler intellects, of profounder thinkers, of more learned scholars, of more elevated moralists, of more subtle philosophers, or more successful toilers after truth, than within the pale of the Church of Christ? Freedom of thought, largeness of affection, nobility of character, and political freedom have all been nursed beneath the shadow of dogma. The sole exceptions to this fact are to be found in the corrupt periods of the Church, when she had departed from the teaching of the inspired Scriptures and substituted dogmas of man's making for dogmas of God's revealing. The instinct of self-preservation required that a corrupt Church should not allow men to think, lest

thinking they should cease to be misled. The persecuting spirit displayed towards Galileo in one department of enquiry, and towards Erasmus in another, was only an effect of the policy of suppression necessitated by the unfaithfulness of the Church herself. But so long as the Church has been faithful to her trust, and has taught no dogmas but what are contained in or may be proved by Holy Writ, she has ever proved herself the nursing-mother of free enquiry, religious liberty, and an ever-advancing civilisation. The emblem of dogma is not the upas-tree blighting everything within its shadow, but the fertilising river carrying plenty and beauty in its course.

To those, at all events, who accept the inspiration of the Word of God, dogma will have no terrors. Whatever truths there are in Scripture above the full grasp of the mortal intellect, we devoutly accept as part of our disciplinary probation. To believe them because we find them clearly taught in the Word, although we may not be able to understand them, is a duty of our religion and an exercise of submissive faith. Truths contrary to reason and conscience we find none. The objections urged against some of the loftiest and most blessed of revealed dogmas we can see to arise either from partial conception or prejudiced misapprehension of their nature. Such, for instance, are the common pleas against the doctrine of the Atonement, as implying the passion of revenge in God and involving the

injustice of punishing one person for the offences of another. Both ideas are such palpable perversions of the truth, that one knows not whether most to wonder at the perversity that will not, or at the prejudice which cannot understand it. To the enlightened reason and awakened conscience the dogmas of the faith are the subjects of endless praise and adoration. Their sublimity and loftiness, their breadth and grasp, their congruity with the highest conceptions of God, and their adaptation to the spiritual wants of man, alike stamp them with the signet of Divinity. Our submission to the evidence that authenticates the dogma is not more full and absolute than our adoring admiration of the dogma itself. On this rock we place our feet, as adequate to support us amid the struggles of life and the fears of death. Here we rest, confident that the faith which has survived the tempests of the past, and has remained unaltered amid the change and vicissitude of all other things, will equally triumph in the future. Over that victory there does not hang, to a believer in revelation, the shadow of a doubt. The only question is by whose hands the triumph will be accomplished. God grant that it may be by our own beloved Church. Here may she place her feet and prove herself the true successor of prophets and apostles by her faithfulness to her great trust. May she proclaim aloud this testimony, and never cease to witness to the last, whether amid reproach or persecution, if needs be

amid suffering and death, to the faith once delivered unto the saints. Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

LECTURE II

THE HISTORICAL FAITH

HEB. xiii. 7, 8

*Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.
Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

THE force of these words is in no degree lessened by separating the two clauses from each other and turning the latter of them into an independent sentence. The sequence of thought irresistibly connects the person of the Saviour and the doctrine of His immutability with the faith of the saints. As the whole sentence stands in the authorised version, the words may simply denote that those who spoke the Word of God to the Hebrews included the unchangeableness of the work and office of Christ among the truths they taught. The separation of the two clauses demanded by the critical necessities of the passage carries the assertion further, and converts their belief into an inspired and authoritative verity: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The words thus understood affirm the same conflict of Christian steadfastness against doctrinal error which has already been shown to be graphically taught in the language of St. Jude. It would have been unnecessary for the inspired writer to press upon the Hebrew Christians the duty of following the faith of their apostolic teachers unless there had been danger of their being led away from it. The exhortation is analogous to the warning of our Lord against the false Christs of the days of the Son of Man: "If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be^a." The caution of the text is to the same purpose. False prophets would arise, teaching another gospel. Varieties of opinion would surround them on every side. Men unlearned and unstable would wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction. Opinions would change and fluctuate. But they were to stand amid all these things firmly upon this assurance, that the Saviour who had been preached unto them could never change. Men's subjective notions might vary, but the objective truth of the Saviour's nature, person, and work was the same for ever; a solid rock amid the heaving ocean of human controversies, fixed and immoveable as Him over whose cloudless being there passes not the shadow of a change.

^a Matt. xxiv. 26, 27.

The text is thus another accent of the voice of the Spirit of God in the Word, emphatically reiterating the assertion of a dogmatic faith given by God to man. The fact pervades the Scriptures everywhere, proclaimed in its positive teaching, prominent in its examples, repeated in its exhortations, promises, and warnings, and not obscurely latent in its moral precepts. Revelation is a message from God to man containing all things necessary to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, a complete system of faith invested with the authority of its Divine Author, and delivered to the keeping of the saints. Faithfully to maintain it, personally to live upon it, and ministerially to preach it throughout the world, is the appointed office of the Church;—the instrument of her conflict and the crown of her glory.

Thus Scripture teaches. The fact is not conclusive in this controversy, because the authority and character of Scripture are involved in dispute. But the assertion puts it into our power to bring the question to the test of facts. Could we suppose human agency to be sufficient to have produced the Christian Scriptures, yet no human agency can have changed the order of the world, or have moulded the course of its events into accordance with its own predetermined plan. The theory of a revelation from the Supreme Governor of the Universe involves certain conditions. Their failure would be at once conclusive against the claims of a dogmatic faith; their fulfilment raises a strong presumption

in its favour. Let it be supposed, for instance, that no organised Church existed, dating back its life to the times of Christ and to the authority of His institution; or that on putting the Church to the question we found her never to have claimed the possession of such a deposit of truth; or that the claim was a modern claim, and the further it was traced back into the past the more vague and shapeless it grew; or that the Church, although she claimed to possess such a faith, could give no reasonable account of it nor offer any pledge beyond her own assertion for its antiquity and authenticity, —either of these alternatives would be conclusive against the claim.

It is evident that the reputed author of the Bible has both omnipotence of power and perfection of wisdom enough to control the order of the world and the minds of men into that channel of moral and religious trial which we find to be explicitly stated in the Word. If He has not done so, we can only conclude that the statement is not His. On the other hand, if the facts of the case be such as would certainly follow on the supposition that the statement of the Bible is the statement of God, their accordance supplies an argument of no little cogency, and is at it were the seal of a Divine Providence placed upon the declaration of the Divine Word. Whether this be the case or not is a matter of simple historical enquiry. In conducting it the saints of the past must be regarded as witnesses, not as authorities. The faith must derive

its sanction not from the human witnesses who attest the facts,—for this would be to rest the authority of God upon the authority of man, balancing the mountain upon the pin's point,—but on the facts attested by them.

The theory of dogma includes three elements. If we start from our own standing-point, the first in order is the Church as a visible community of saints, linked by a continuous succession of members to the time of our Lord. The second element is the existence in the possession of this Church of a body of dogmatic truth traceable to the same period and identical in substance during every age. Third in the calculation is the canon of the Scriptures, as the authoritative documents of the faith; the fountain-head, from which all the streams of truth have flowed, and to which they may be traced back. All the three, the Church, the dogma, and the documents, synchronise. They appear in the history of the world at the same time, that time being identified by independent evidence with the ministry of Jesus Christ the Prophet of Nazareth. They are found to stretch side by side from that date continuously to the present time, and they still exist in indissoluble union. They are thus, when considered simply as matters of historical fact, three distinct lines of evidence converging into one conclusion, three rays of light shining out of one Sun. The Church might conceivably have existed without the dogma, the dogma without the Church, and the sacred writings considered as ancient books

without either the one or the other. As a matter of fact they all exist and have ever existed together, a threefold cord between man and God.

To complete the theory of the dogmatic faith, the relation existing between the Scriptures on the one side, and the Church and the dogma on the other, must be borne in mind. The Scriptures are the criterion of the Church and the standard of the doctrine. The language of St. Paul to the Galatians clearly includes this; for the false teacher is condemned by the false doctrine. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed^b." An authoritative communication from God, conveying the commission of the Church and giving authority to the doctrine taught by her, constitutes the theory of the faith. Whether it be accepted or rejected, it ought to be considered in its completeness. To leave out one part of it, and then to condemn the rest, is a palpable injustice:

Yet with this mistake, whether consciously made or unconsciously matters not, rationalistic thought is chargeable. In reviewing the facts of the past, and using them as the data for general conclusions, the third element is omitted. The act is like taking the pivot out of a machine; the whole falls to pieces. The entire aspect both of the Church and of the dogmatic faith is changed, and it is no wonder that the conclusion should be adverse to them both [I].

^b Gal. i. 8.

When the authoritative record of the faith is left out of view, no standard of discrimination remains between a false Church and a true Church, a corrupt Church and a pure Church, a Church which is no Church and a Church truly Apostolic both in doctrine and form. The name alone survives to constitute the thing. To the eye of the historian the entire Church is viewed together, as one, and as being in every member of it an equally true representative of dogmatic Christianity. Whatever is found within this circle is charged equally upon "*the faith*," and the faith is accordingly dishonoured by the shifting extravagancies of superstition. Against this conclusion the Church of England in her Master's Name emphatically protests. In her XIXth Article she asserts the general errability of Churches, specifying by name the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome. In six of her doctrinal Articles she charges it as a crime upon the Church of Rome that she has taught dogmas which not only are not Scriptural but are contradictory to Scripture; guilty of "arrogancy and impiety^c," "a fond thing vainly invented^d," giving "occasion to many superstitions^e," "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits^f." In the rubrics, in the Preface to the Prayer-book, in the Canons, and in the Homilies she reiterates the same charge with great energy of language [2]. The sceptical critic may sneer at these accusations,

^c Art. XIV.^d Art. XXII.^e Art. XXVIII.^f Art. XXXI.

as the sectarian fruits of dogmatic teaching; but so long as the Scriptures exist, their truth or otherwise is a simple matter of fact. Here are the Scriptures and here the dogmas,—the dogmas ever held in common by the universal Church on the one side, and the dogmas taught by special branches of the Church on the other. Are the Scriptures and the dogmas consistent, or are they not? The dogmatic faith is responsible for its own teaching, and for that alone.

But the error reaches beyond this. For the claims of the Church, deprived of their historical basis in the Word, become a mere form of human speculation, instead of a Divine ordinance. They are thus regarded by the disciples of rationalism, as standing on precisely the same footing as other modes of thought, with the authority of the understanding and nothing else for their ultimate basis. In the supposed absence of a Divine revelation the rationalist, it appears to me, is unquestionably right. The Church of Rome, for instance, has been accustomed in times past to accept the true inspiration of the Scriptures, and only since she has been pressed by the arguments of the Reformers has she found it her policy to depreciate their authority. But she teaches that the rule of faith is in herself, and that she gives authority to the Scriptures, not derives authority from them. When, therefore, she is asked for her credentials, she has none to give beyond herself. She affirms herself to be the depositary of the authority of Christ upon earth,

but she has no evidence to offer beyond her own affirmation. The old argument of antiquity and universality she has practically given up, and taken the theory of development in exchange. The breach between her and all Christian antiquity consequently becomes wider day by day. Hence she possesses no evidence for her asserted authority save her own consciousness of its existence. But this is exactly the ground of the theist, the pantheist, and even the atheist. The instruments of discovery used by these several schools of thought are different. With one it may be a natural sentiment, with another a mystical intuition, with a third the speculative intellect; but in each case the process is equally internal and subjective. They have no historical basis, and if the existence of the inspired records of the faith be denied or forgotten, the Church sinks into exactly the same position. In such a case the most dogmatic creed, philosophically considered, becomes a form of human speculation and nothing more.

Thus the dogma itself becomes involved in the same confusion as the Church. I have already stated that I employ the word dogma in these Lectures for a revealed truth and for ecclesiastical formulas so far, and so far only, as they truly express the mind of God in His Word. True dogma is the expression of authority. But its claims do not rest on the use of the dogmatic form, but on the proof of the authority whence it is derived. There may be Church dogmas which are not Divine dogmas. Thus the seventh canon

of the Council of Ephesus condemns the "wicked and perverted dogmas" of Nestorius. Our Church positively asserts this distinction, for she rejects the dogmas of tradition, of free-will, of justification by works, of works of supererogation, of purgatory, of transubstantiation, wholly and solely upon this ground. She rests the rejection not on her own "*ipsa dixit*," but on the authoritative documents of the faith; "the very pure Word of God" as she calls them in the Preface to the Prayer-book, "God's Word written" as she designates them in the XXth Article. Take away this ultimate standard and all dogma must be confounded together and allowed to stand on the same footing. No process exists for distinguishing one part from another which is not wholly speculative. This is the fatal error of rationalism when it becomes the historian of Christian doctrine. It contemptuously throws all dogmatic teaching, whether Scriptural or not, into the same category, and visits it with the same condemnation. Look at the Church and the dogma without the Word which conveys the commission of the one and furnishes the standard of the other, and the result is inevitable.

The same mistake destroys the unity of dogmatic teaching. We affirm the faith of the Church to be one, and ever to have been one and invariable from the beginning. If we are taunted by the variations perceptible in the history of religious opinion and in the tone and proportion of religious teaching, we reply that variations in the mode of teaching dogma are one thing, and variations in

the dogmas themselves another. We do not deny the existence of variations of opinion and of modes of teaching during the history of the Church, for the faith has been delivered to the saints and the weaknesses of human nature necessarily affect the discharge of the trusteeship. It cannot possibly be otherwise. But the objective faith has remained the same, and has ever supplied the standard of the human aberration. For instance, we admit that the principle of religious toleration and freedom of conscience has not always been fully understood. It would have been little short of a miracle if Christian writers had been able to throw off altogether the influence of their own times and anticipate the character of centuries long subsequent. The general progress of mankind, the increase of human intercourse, the closer bonds of common interest, the acquisition of a better mutual knowledge, and a thousand influences of the same kind, have made men more tolerant of diversities of religious opinion. But men do not necessarily become indifferent to the maintenance of God's truth because they become more conscious of the weaknesses of the human trustees of it. This progress of opinion represents no change in the dogmatic truth of the Church, but only a better appreciation of its principles. The dogma is the same now as in the days of Augustine ; was the same in the days of Augustine as it is now. The more tolerant spirit of our own times arises not from the discovery of any new principles of truth, but from our clearer and more accurate

apprehension of the old principles. Faults in the application of truth constitute no just ground of accusation against the truth. We are taunted with the fact that great and holy men of the past believed it right to employ the sword of the magistrate for the propagation and defence of the Christian faith, and justified themselves by the authority of the Scriptures. We admit the fact, but we reply that the fault was in the men who misunderstood the Scriptures, not in the Scriptures which were misunderstood. We are able to judge for ourselves what the Bible teaches. Does it teach persecution, or does it not? If it does, then charge the fault upon the faith. But if it does not, charge the fault upon the men who misunderstood it.

That the tone of opinion has undergone modifications at different periods of the world, being brought more or less into accordance with the true teaching of the faith, is not to be denied. There is nothing strange or incomprehensible in the fact, for the saints are men like other men, and liable to the same influences. But the change has consisted in the proportionate prominence and importance given to different portions of Christian dogma, not in any alteration of the dogma itself. Individual disposition acting upon mankind in general through the influence of men of peculiar genius and aptitude to teach or govern, the special circumstances of an age, its external events and its moral and intellectual characteristics, have all contributed to produce this effect. What, for instance, was more natural than

that the early Christians, familiar with persecution and holding their faith at the daily peril of their lives, should find comfort in fixing their eyes prominently upon the power of their crucified and risen Master and His future coming to judge the world in righteousness? What more accordant with all human experience, both within the Church and without it, than that the establishment of Christianity by Constantine should have introduced Pagan elements into the Christian Church and mixed up Pagan modes of thinking with the interpretation of Scripture? What more true to the experienced tendency of human nature to run into extremes than that men, fighting at once for political and religious liberty, should recall the heroic saints of the ancient Jewish Church, and in the recollection should sometimes forget that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God?" If the Church has sometimes worn too stern an aspect, if firmness has run into obstinacy, constancy into violence, zeal into persecution, the cause is to be found in the human weaknesses of the saints who have held the faith, not in the faith itself. No change has passed over it; for here are its records, unchanged and unchangeable. The sun in the midst of the heavens does not always present the same appearance to the eye; but the difference exists, not in the radiant orb itself, but in the earthly atmosphere through which it shines.

In thus claiming that the relation existing between the Scriptures on one side, and the Church

witnessing to the faith and the faith to which she witnesses on the other, should constantly be borne in mind, I am only pleading for common justice. The Word of God constantly speaks of its own office. I do not argue that what Scripture says is therefore necessarily true. I wish to bring the claim to the test of fact. But the claim must first be clearly understood. The theory of the faith as stated in Scripture itself involves three elements, the Church, the dogma, and the Word. In examining the theory by the facts, the three elements resolve themselves into two, namely, the Church accredited by the Word, and the dogma taught in the Word or gathered out of the Word. For no other Church, for no other dogma, do I plead. Our own branch of the body of Christ recognises these, and these alone. Her faithful children must neither be more narrow than her comprehensiveness, nor more lax than her jealousy for the truth of God. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith."

From the theory I pass on to the facts. How far do they correspond, or not correspond, with the conditions of the theory?

I On the existence of the Church it is needless for me to dwell. Her history is as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of the heavens. As clearly as we can trace the day backwards to its dawn, can we trace the life of the Church back to the Christian era. In the 750th year of Rome she was not in existence. A hundred years later she not only existed, but had spread so widely from Palestine over the provinces of the Roman world, and had struck her roots so deeply into the hearts and consciences of mankind, that the whole strength of the iron empire was inadequate to destroy her. In the 850th year of Rome the Church was already a power in the world, with a definite faith and a collection of sacred books, and an internal organisation and an active missionary agency. The links of her unbroken succession from that time to this are among the most indisputable facts of human history, and simply as facts of history I propose to treat them. Our knowledge relative to the historical rise of the Christian Church does not depend in the slightest degree upon the authority of the Bible considered as a collection of sacred books, but on ordinary historical testimony. The most absolute sceptic must believe this, unless in consistency with his principles he believes nothing.

The first step towards ascertaining the nature of the Church's message to the world is to cross-examine the messenger. What is her own account of the faith she preaches, and how does she profess herself to have gained it? Is it a product of

Christian speculation gradually developed out of one or two germinal truths? Is it the accretion of old beliefs hardening by tradition into a conventional shape? Is it a system rounded off into logical completeness by schoolmen? Is it the conscious invention of a priesthood, taking advantage of the ignorance and superstitions of mankind? What account does the Church herself give of the message she professes to deliver?

The reply of the Church, extending as it does over nineteen centuries, can only be gathered from her formal documents, or from the extant writings of her most illustrious members. It is useless to speculate on the number of Christian works destroyed by bigotry or lost through ignorance. We must accept the evidence as it exists, and rest our conclusions on facts however imperfect, rather than on theories however ingenious. The voice of the Church may ring during the early ages of the faith less loudly from this cause, but it is firm and distinct nevertheless, and never stammers in its utterance. Her testimony is unanimous that she has been put in charge of a message to mankind, and that the truths she teaches are not her own, but a revelation invested with the authority of her glorified Master. Her mission, as she herself has ever understood it, is not to propound a philosophy or develop a speculation, but to preach a revelation, and give to the world what she has herself received, "the faith once delivered to the saints."

This conviction has ever run like a thread of

gold through all the phases of Christian controversy. The life of the Church in its intense mental and moral activity has displayed itself in freedom and diversity. Disputes have arisen concerning the rule of faith, concerning the interpretation of Scripture, concerning the limits of Church authority, concerning the definitions of doctrine, and concerning its technical expression. But amid an almost endless diversity on other questions, on this one great central fact—that she is the keeper and witness of a revelation from God—the Church has never faltered for an instant. From the time that Apostolic lips first raised the proclamation, it has never ceased to be heard amid the din of human strife. In weakness or in strength, from lonely wastes or from stately temples, from secret dungeons or from the heart of great cities, amid times of sorrow when she has witnessed in sackcloth or amid times of imperial prosperity, the one cry has ever been heard. The lapse of ages has not weakened, nor has persecution sufficed to interrupt, nor death itself been able to silence “the voice crying in the wilderness.”

It is easy to assert this unanimous witness of the Church to the nature of her own commission. But it is not equally easy to realise what this unanimity involves, to understand its meaning, or even to measure its extent. To speak of the testimony of nineteen centuries conveys little impression to the mind till we analyse the notion, and pass under review, however rapidly, the varied fortunes,

the successive changes, the great events, the disasters and revolutions, the rise and fall of empires, the progression of knowledge, arts, and science, embraced within their circuit.

It is difficult for us at this distance of time to realise the condition of the world when the voice of the Church first took up her proclamation, so strangely different was it from the features and associations of the present. At a time when philosophy was sick of its own speculations, when the East was already cumbered with the ruins of fallen empires, when civilisation had run to seed and society was rotten with its own irremediable corruptions, when the greatness of the world was centred in spots now desolate and peoples now effete, and when Western Europe, the present mistress of the world, lay in the thick darkness of barbaric ignorance, the Church entered upon her commission.

The accents were at first the accents of Apostles and Prophets. The voice of inspiration then spoke from living lips what it still speaks from pages instinct with the living Spirit. The tongue of the Incarnate God began the message. From amid the garden of Gethsemane and the gathering shadows of His agony on Calvary, the words yet thrill upon the ears of faith, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me." The tongues of the Apostles echo the lesson. Peter declares both the authority of the message and its universal purpose:

“He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins^h.” Paul swells the strain of testimony: “The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christⁱ.” James rests his practical wisdom on the same basis, for he recognises Christian virtue to be the doing “of the Word^k,” and warns his readers against those who “err from the truth^l.” John’s gentle voice describes his own commission: “This then is the message that we have heard of Him, and declare unto you^m.” Jude writes of “the common salvation” and the integrity of “the faithⁿ.” The latest book of the Divine Canon opens with the words, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him Blessed is he that readeth^o,” and closes with the warning that no human hand should add to or take away from “the words of the book of this prophecy^p.”

Here the voice of inspiration ceases. As its last solemn accents die away upon the ear, the Church takes up the cry and echoes on the testimony. The single tones of her multitudinous tongues no longer carry with them the force of an infallible

^h Acts x. 42.ⁱ Gal. i. 11, 12.^k James i. 22.^l James v. 19.^m 1 John i. 5.ⁿ Jude 3.^o Rev. i. 1-3.^p Ibid. xxii. 19.

inspiration; but the ordinary gifts of the Spirit still remained, and His teaching was not less true, although it was less plenary, in the post-Apostolic ages than before. Had the number of inspired teachers been continued and indefinitely enlarged, faith itself would have become confused and bewildered by the multiplicity of their teaching. The Apostolic company, conspicuous alike in their gifts and in their labours above all succeeding preachers of the truth, announced the Divine message. Ten thousand times ten thousand voices were now to repeat, and by repeating multiply it. The Truth was one, and the Church, like a many-sided lens, reflected the one unchanging image on every side.

Five great periods, successive waves of time, have passed over the Church since then. First came the ante-Nicene period, during which she witnessed in sackcloth. The number of individual witnesses is comparatively small, and we are therefore able to exhaust their evidence. A voice or two at first sound to us out of the remote antiquity, and fresh accents swell the cry into a louder sound as she gathered strength and courage from the very blasts of the persecuting tempest. Ten times the stroke fell upon her, scathing as it seemed her life; and after each blow a louder chorus of voices, proclaiming the same everlasting message, meets the ears. The distinctness of the office assumed by the Church, and the definiteness of the message conveyed during this first period, is of especial importance; for here was forged the first strong link of the chain which

knits, by an indissoluble unity, the faith of our own day to the faith of Apostolic times [3].

From no voices do the assertion of a solemn trust and a completed deposit of truth issue with more trenchant decision than from the voices of the men whose experience stretched back into the first century, and who conversed personally either with the Apostles or with their immediate successors. The tongues of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus first take up the message, and their voices ring to our ears out of the far distance sharp and clear as the battle-cry of the Church. How strong are the words of Ignatius: "For if they who do these things after the flesh perish, how much more if they shall corrupt the faith of God by bad doctrine for which Jesus Christ was crucified. Such a man being wicked shall go into unextinguishable fire, and every one who listens to him." Not less keen was the sword of martyred Polycarp: "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is anti-Christ; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, is the first-born of Satan; wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many and their false doctrine, let us return to the Word which has been handed down to us from the beginning." Clement of Rome, Barnabas, and Hermas, in the broken accents alone sounding from the tongue of these primitive saints, repeat the same testimony. "The

rule of faith is but one alone, unchangeable and unreformable," are the words of Irenæus. But as the multitude of witnesses thickens, individual quotation becomes in this place impossible. Sainted Justin, and stern Tertullian, and philosophic Clement of Alexandria, and Origen subtle and speculative, and lofty-hearted Cyprian, and great Athanasius still speak, as if we heard the cry of the distant battle-field. Not from one of them does a faltering word or a hesitating utterance reach us. The voice is urgent, as in the sight of the other world, announcing to a heathenism lying in the valley of the shadow of death God's saving message of pardon and peace.

Then followed the second great period of the Church's history. Hitherto she had stood alone in the midst of a Pagan darkness. Great and marvellous as had been her success in leavening the world with her Divinely-given truth, shaking the foundations of superstition and gathering souls beneath the banner of the Crucified, she was after all but a little light in a dark place. The twenty millions of Christians witnessed amid the two hundred millions of the population of the Roman Empire, strong in the faith and in the quickening Spirit of God, but numerically lost amid the corrupting masses on every side. The line of separation between the two had hitherto been strongly defined and clear. But now all at once it was broken down, and the two nominally became one. The distinction of a true faith visible to the eye of God alone,

still remained ; but the external line of demarcation perceptible to human eyes, was gone. What wonder is it that this abrupt external expansion should have weakened the inward life, and involved the faith itself in perils comparatively unknown in the time of her fiery persecution ? The establishment of Christianity by Constantine rather brought the world into the bosom of the Church than rendered the Church triumphant over the world. The triumph was great indeed, and I see upon the whole no adequate reason for regarding it as otherwise than a triumph, for such indeed it is depicted in the vision of the Apocalypse. If the historical interpretation of that marvellous book be true, and the evidence in its favour appears to me to be as near positive demonstration as internal proof can conceivably approximate, the victory of Christianity over Paganism by its establishment under Constantine is symbolised by the hand of God Himself. It is presented less as a gain to the Gospel of the Crucified than as an infliction of God's wrath upon the Pagan world ; in the language of Gibbon, "a dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the earth with darkness and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night [4]." The establishment of Christianity was therefore a triumph, but it was a triumph full of peril to the purity of the faith. No other result could follow, humanly speaking, but the infusion of Pagan ideas into the teaching of the Church, correspondent to the admission of Pagan members within her pale.

Yet the declension of the Church's purity was so ordered as not to interrupt her witness to the character of her commission. The charge with which she was put in trust was yet held sacred, although she began to think more of herself than of her work, and in the excessive consciousness of her privileges to forget the weight of her responsibility. The gradual corruption of her doctrine consisted not so much in denying the truth with which she had been put in trust, as in adding to it dogmas of her own which she had never received. The result was the same in its practical effect, but less abrupt. It was as if some stately tree, pointing towards the skies, had become so laden with the snowdrift as little by little to bend its pliant boughs towards the earth.

Nevertheless the voice of the Church and her battle-cry against the world still rang out loud and clear. "That only ought to be believed concerning God, for the belief of which concerning Himself He Himself is both the witness and the author," are the words of Hilary. "As it respects the Divine and holy mysteries of the faith," says Cyril of Jerusalem, "not even the least point ought to be declared without the Holy Scriptures." "Limits are presented to us, and foundations laid both in the structure of the faith and the traditions of the Apostles and the Holy Scriptures, and the instructions delivered from one to the other, so through all these the truth of God is preserved safe, and let no man be deceived by new fables."

These are the words of Epiphanius in his exposition of the faith. Basil repeats the exhortation: "We adjure every man who fears the Lord and expects the judgment of God, not to be carried away by divers doctrines. If any one teaches otherwise and adheres not to the wholesome words of the faith, but rejecting the oracles of the Spirit holds his own teaching to be of more authority than the evangelical documents, avoid such a man." "Which faith," re-echoes Gregory, "word for word we keep pure and intact as we received it, and judge the least depravation of the words delivered (*παράδοθέντων*) the extreme of blasphemy and impiety."

Ambrose spoke in the same spirit to Constantine: "I would not, O sacred Emperor, that you should trust to argument or any reasoning of mine; let us enquire of the Scriptures; let us interrogate the Apostles; let us interrogate the Prophets; let us interrogate Christ." "The doctrine of the Church, which is the house of God, may be found in the fulness of the Divine books," writes Jerome. "It would be the instigation of a demoniacal spirit," adds Theophilus of Alexandria, "to follow the conceits of the human mind, and to think anything Divine beyond what has the authority of the Scriptures." Rich are the expressions in which Crysostom's burning tongue enlarges upon "the depth of the Divine Scriptures," "the secrets of the Divine oracles," "the spiritual weapons," "the Divine charms" of the revealed Word. "Let us hear, as many of

us as reject the reading of the Scriptures, to what harm we are subjecting ourselves, to what poverty. For where are we to apply ourselves to the real practice of virtue, who do not so much as know the very laws according to which our practice should be guided." "It is impossible for us," is the devout explanation of Cyril of Alexandria, "to say or at all think anything concerning God, beyond what has been divinely declared in the Divine oracles of the Old and New Testament." "These are the doctrines of the Divine Spirit, which it behoves every one to follow continually, and to preserve the rule of these doctrines immovable," argues Theodoret. From the seat of the Roman Episcopate how vigorously sounds the voice of Gregory: "What indeed is Holy Scripture but a letter of the Omnipotent God to His creatures!" Nor must we fail to note the testimony of Augustine: "The city of God believes also the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which we call canonical, whence that faith itself takes its rise by which the just lives." Thus clearly sound the voices of the past; and whether we catch the louder tones of the great leaders of the Church, or the lower utterances of the throng of holy witnesses, still it is the same. No dissentient accent or faltering utterance interrupts the swell of testimony. The tone is one and the subject one, and the message is one, "the faith once delivered to the saints," and the centre of that faith "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Now, however, the Church entered upon a new phase of her life, one period passing away into another gradually as the rainbow hues of sunset. The mediæval period was the period alike of religious and of intellectual darkness. Learning of a kind, and piety cramped and narrow like the learning, still survived, but they followed the stagnating tendencies of the times, and were concentrated here and there, like waters locked up in lonely spots, and not flowing freely through the land, carrying abundance and making music in their course. Learning was cramped, for it was confined within a most limited range and fettered with technicalities. Attention was directed much more to the instrumental portion of our knowledge, the mind's tools and apparatus, than to the knowledge itself. Words rather than ideas, arguments rather than truths, distinctions rather than generalisations, were the tendency of the time. It was impossible that piety should escape the trammels thrown round the free limbs of knowledge. It caught the formality of the circumstances under which it lived, and became narrow and angular as the cells and cloisters that sheltered it.

Nor were learning and piety less limited in extension than in character. They flourished beneath the shadow of convents, where men, shut out from the struggling world outside, betook themselves to study and speculation out of very sickness of heart and weariness of mind. Their spheres of influence lay amid the general barbarism of the time, like

the green gardens beneath the monastery walls, spots of fresh and pleasant fertility contrasted with the war-trodden and desolated aspect of the land beyond. Now an age takes its character not from the few, but from the many. Not the exceptions, but the rule; not the isolated instances, but the general average fixes its mental and moral features. Hence the mediæval centuries were truly the dark ages. Learning and piety appeared to hide themselves in secret from the rude interruptions of lawless violence and unprincipled force.

The picture was much the same all the world over. In the East, activity and enterprise lay buried beneath the ruins of past magnificence. In the West they were prostrated by barbaric conquest or pined in exhaustion, as the heavings of the storm began to subside and peace and order to emerge out of the chaos. Yet the witness of the Church to the one great fact that she is the bearer of a message from God survived nevertheless. The voice may still be heard, though it sounds as if it were stifled by authority and choked by definition.

The scholastic theology represented a new school of thought, characterised not alone by mental activity, but also by a deep interest in the great questions of Divine truth. On such a subject it befits me to speak with great modesty. But it appears to me that the tone and spirit of the schoolmen, although thoroughly impregnated with the Church principles of their day, is something much higher and better than simply ecclesiastical. Their

fatal error lay not so much in an excessive logical subtlety, as in the purposes to which they applied it. Had it been confined simply to the refutation of error and used as an apologetic weapon against heresy, employing subtlety in defending the faith against subtlety in attacking it, its use would have been legitimate. But they unhappily employed it on its positive side as an adequate instrument for teaching, and even for working out the truth of Divine things, and thus they unconsciously throned reason in the place of revelation. I say unconsciously, because the language of Anselm, for instance, shows how very far such a result was from his intention [5]. Hence great and broad truths, lying beyond the reach of the reasoning faculty, were merged in subtle questions, minute and curious beyond the finding out of man. Such, for instance, were the theses of Peter Lombard relative to the Divine Essence, whether the Father begot the Essence or the Essence begot itself. Such the discussions of Aquinas on the nature of truth and falsehood, and whether the notions of "the one" and of "the many" were contradictory. The wonder is, not that religion should have suffered from such disputations, but that so much real and genuine piety should have survived amid them.

The unfavourable impression produced by a critical account of the philosophy of the schoolmen is considerably modified by a personal acquaintance with their writings. The witness of the Church to the dogmatic nature of her faith at all events survived.

They not only maintained dogmas as the very life of the Church, but they carried their foundations below Church authority, to their only true and permanent basis in the revealed Scriptures. Take, for instance, Anselm's celebrated treatise on the Atonement, "*Cur Deus Homo*." In one place only does an explicit reference occur to the authority of revelation [6]. But it would be a great mistake to conclude from this that reason and not Scripture was made the ultimate basis of belief. In truth Scripture is latent in the argument from end to end. There is not a proposition which does not admit of defence by Scriptural quotation. The same deep reverence for the Word pervades the stateliness of Peter Lombard, the tender grace of Abelard, the pious fervour of Aquinas, and the glowing devotion of John Scotus. It may be traced beneath the arrogant haughtiness of Langfranc, who seems ever to have written with the episcopal staff in his hand. It underlies even the dry dialectics of Alexander de Ales, the Doctor *irrefragabilis*, whose laborious subtlety and ponderous argumentation, unilluminated as it seems by a solitary spark of spiritual life, place the study of his works beyond the power of any ordinary mental digestion.

But the more distinctive the characteristics and the greater the evils produced by the system of the schoolmen, the more need is there to rescue from forgetfulness their emphatic assertion of the dogmatic authority of the Word. Thus Langfranc declares the Scriptures to be sufficient for salvation

because God is the author of them, and rests his arguments against Berengarius on the teaching of the Scriptures and "the inviolable authority of the Prophets and sacred Fathers." Anselm professes that anything he might possibly have taught contrary to Scripture was undoubtedly false, and declares in another place that reason is not to be believed even on grounds apparently indisputable if its conclusions contradict the Word. Rosceline vehemently charges Abelard with ignorance of the Word of God. Abelard himself declares that he rests his convictions on the rock on which Christ built the Church, and then proceeds to explain this rock to be the faith, and to prove the articles of the faith by quotations from the Scriptures. Peter Lombard, anxious to direct his readers, under the guidance of God (*Deo duce*), to the knowledge of Divine things, adopts "the Divine Scriptures" as "the prescribed rule of doctrine." Alexander de Ales argues at length upon the ground that whatever is learned from the Scriptures is taught by "the testimony of the Spirit." Aquinas points out the necessity arising from the fallibility of the reason that we should be taught concerning "Divine things" by "Divine inspiration." John Scotus dwells most eloquently on the perfection of "the Divine Scriptures," and the wisdom of God in giving them to us in their existing shape. He describes them as a temple where God dwells and into which He brings those that love Him; and thus he prays—"O Lord Jesus, I ask from Thee no other reward, no other happiness,

no other joy than this, that I may rightly understand Thy words inspired by Thy Holy Spirit [7].”

Centuries rolled on and the world entered upon another period. Its mind and conscience and heart awoke to life together, and mankind began to be agitated by the first throes of the Reformation. The first spark was lit in the East, but was fanned into a flame throughout the West. A freer spirit of enquiry, a more liberal learning, and a more enlightened estimate of the true dignity of man sprang up together. The electric spark once kindled could not be precluded by any straining of authority from entering into the domain of the conscience as well as the domain of the intellect. With one great and vigorous rebound from the tyranny of the past the world sprang into freedom. The impulse was like the kindling of a fire. While the heel of authority was trampling it out in one direction, it burst into more resistless strength in another. Of that movement the Reformed Church of England was the child, linked as closely and inseparably to the primitive and apostolic Church of Christ on the one side, as on the other she is parted by a whole abyss of irreconcilable differences from the superstitions of mediævalism and the fixed corruptions of the Church of Rome.

Yet this very difference only invests with the more force the unanimous testimony of the universal Church to the dogmatic character of the faith. The Church of Rome, as she must now be called, is trebly dogmatic, and must ever be dogmatic to excess.

She is dogmatic by virtue of the truth inherited from the days of the Apostles, by virtue of the doctrines she has herself added under the plea of development to the Apostolic and primitive teaching, and by virtue of the absolute jurisdiction she claims over faith and conscience. The Reformation was a rebound from the strain imposed on the human heart and intellect by Romanism and Scholasticism, and it would have been perfectly natural if the whole fabric, compounded of what was Apostolic and what was mediæval, had been cast away together. In the rejection of the false the rejection of the true might easily have been included. The history of the unestablished Churches of the Reformation at home and abroad shows how strong was the tendency in this direction. In snapping the links of Church authority the links of inspired authority, had they been forged of the same material and welded by the same hand, might have been snapped likewise. Considering the tendency of human nature ever to run into extremes, such a result would not in any case have been wonderful. Had the entire teaching of the Church been equally human, and identical in its character and in its claims upon faith and conscience, such a result would inevitably have followed. But the fact was different, and the result has been different. Her glorified Head has graciously watched over His Church. The open Bible, which supplied under the agency of God the Holy Ghost the stimulus and the object of the movement, suggested at the same time its limits. "Prove all things,

hold fast that which is good," was the Divinely-given principle, and the Scriptures were the Divinely-given standard for its application. Dogmas found to be in accordance with Scripture were retained; dogmas found to be contrary to it were rejected. The dogmas rejected were found to be new; the dogmas retained to be ancient and Apostolical. The human additions to the faith were carefully taken down, that the House of God might stand before the world, like a glorious edifice, resonant with the songs of the saints, and witnessing in every part to the skill and wisdom of its Divine Architect.

So loud is the witness of the Church, and so many are the voices that swell her testimony from the Reformation downwards, that individual utterances are comparatively lost to the ear. Passing on rapidly as I am doing, they cannot be separately distinguished. A catena of the English Fathers, bringing the witness down to our own days, may properly be added in an appendix, but can form no part of the body of this lecture [8]. The facts of the case show that the evidence is still the same and still unanimous. A laborious ingenuity may perhaps discover an isolated expression here and there, which separated from its context and general bearing may appear to express impatience of the trammels of dogmatic divinity. But I believe that no formal suggestion can be found that the doctrine of the Church is anything of her own framing, or anything less august than a direct message from

God—a completed message, fixed and definite and changeless as the Deity from whom it proceeds.

Thus the proclamation of the saints in the first century yet rings full and clear in the nineteenth. The possession of a revealed message from God to man is not an idea caught at intervals by enthusiasts and fanatics; held and then lost, and then recovered; a succession broken and interrupted; but it is a succession in all ages, under all circumstances continuous and unbroken, consentient and unanimous,—a voice never for a moment silenced, repeating from first to last the one faith, and centering it round the one person, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

II From the facts relative to the Church and to her testimony I pass on to the facts relative to the dogmatic faith itself. For it is not enough to show that the Church of Christ has ever unanimously asserted herself to be in possession of a Divinely-given and therefore dogmatic faith, unless the faith itself can be presented and identified. The links of the doctrinal succession must be traced from the beginning downwards; or backwards, as will be more convenient, from our own times to the times of the Apostles. The task is comparatively easy, because the enquiry deals with formal doctrines embodied in formal Confessions. These Confessions, either by the fact of their authoritative composition in one age, or of their authoritative adoption in another, constitute the chain of

ecclesiastical descent. It is not my purpose to enter into the question whether these doctrines are true or not. I am only concerned to show that the Church has ever held them, and that, whether true or not, they constitute the one unchanged dogmatic faith held by her from the beginning hitherto as a sacred trust, to be maintained at the cost of life itself.

The natural starting-point of the enquiry is supplied in the doctrinal Articles of our own Church. This basis is, however, too broad for my argument, and needs to be narrowed. Our Articles contain not the faith only, but the faith guarded by special definitions, having reference to the circumstances existing at the date of their composition, and amplified (as other creeds have been) to meet the exigencies of controversy. Not with the temporary corruptions, but with the eternal truths of the Church, my present argument has to do. I narrow therefore the platform of the Articles by comparing them with those priceless remains of antiquity, the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. The Nicene Creed, as standing between the other two, being fuller in expression than the Apostolic, and at once more comprehensive and less minute than the trenchant definitions of the Athanasian Creed, supplies the best representative of the immutable faith of the Church of Christ. That all the articles of the Nicene Creed are to be found in the Articles of the Church of England is a fact too palpable to admit of denial. I put on one side all explanatory

and defining statements in excess of the Nicene Creed, and I take this Creed alone.

It is important to note that the articles of the Nicene Creed when properly understood (and the key to their interpretation is supplied by the structure of the Creed itself), are not, as they have sometimes been represented, a mere dry enumeration of facts. I admit that they are, if I may so express it, the bones of the doctrinal structure of the Church. But the Church is a living Church, and has ever consisted of living members; and a living Church involves not a doctrinal skeleton alone, but the flesh, and form, and colour, and motions of life. The very words "I believe" imply the moral element of the whole—the contact of the asserted facts with the wants and weaknesses, the duties and responsibilities of living souls. Who is it that believes but a member of the ruined and fallen race to whom the purpose of saving mercy has been adapted? Why do I believe, but because the saving purpose of the Christian faith embraces all my personal hopes and fears for time and eternity? What do I believe but Divinely-revealed dogmas on subjects with which faith alone, and not sight, can possibly make me acquainted? Why do I stand forth publicly to declare my belief, but because I bear the responsibilities of a Christian man and look for a future judgment and a final recompense?—truths directly taught as well as indirectly implied in the Creed, "I believe that He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead."

Or we may argue in another way. The Creed asserts certain facts concerning God either in regard to His existence or to His conduct and agency. But it would be blasphemy to suppose that God does ought in vain, or without an adequate object for doing it. The assertion of the fact consequently implies the existence of a reason for it, and the reason and the fact must alike be found, where alone they both exist, in the Word of God. The facts are not therefore dead facts, ending with themselves, but living facts, full of meaning and power, and linking themselves on to other influences. The truths relative to the three Persons of the Godhead and the history of their dealings with mankind contain the whole economy of salvation, the entire length and breadth of the faith. To say that God the Father creates, God the Son redeems, and God the Holy Ghost sanctifies, is to express in few words the human side as well as the Divine side of salvation. The Divine side is the engraving on the seal, and the human side is the impression made by it. The engraved seal portrays the operations of the indivisible Trinity; but press it upon the heart, and it throws up in reverse the whole story of the human sin, ruin, and suffering it was the purpose of the indivisible Trinity to remedy.

The articles of the Nicene Creed contain therefore the faith of the Church, and all more minute and detailed Confessions are but enlargements and explanations of them. They may be true or false, Scriptural or unscriptural, ancient or modern, but

they all take their matter from these articles. If they be true and orthodox, as the Athanasian Creed for instance, they do not assert one idea not already involved in the articles of the Nicene Creed. If they are untrue and heterodox, they are either additions to them or perversions of them. These articles are the germinal principles out of which all other Confessions spring, and by which, in the judgment of the Church, they are to be measured, as the articles themselves are to be measured by the final test of the Word of God.

I have already said that the dogmas of the Nicene Creed are all contained beyond a question in the Articles of Religion of the Church of England. They also constitute the basis of every other Confession known in the Church. In our own country they are embodied more or less fully in the Westminster, Irish, and Scotch Confessions, and in the Confessions of the Baptists, Congregationalists, Anabaptists, and Quakers. On the Continent they enter into the Waldensian, Augustinian, Tetrapolitan, Saxon, Bohemian, Helvetic, Belgian, and Polish Confessions. In the East they are embodied in the "orthodox doctrine of the Apostolic Eastern Church;" and lastly, in the West, in the Romish Confession contained in the Creed of Pope Pius IV.

In reviewing the whole range of extant Church Confessions, about forty in number [9], although some of them exist in a very fragmentary form, one thing is worthy of a passing remark. It is that the later creeds, those for instance of the

sixteenth century,—a century, as was natural, prolific in Confessions,—are intimately related to the earliest creeds by their precise assertion of the dogmatic character of the Scriptural faith. All creeds are necessarily dogmatic. But the early creeds and the later creeds agree in referring their dogmatic character specifically to the authority of the written Word. During the middle ages the assertion of this principle was dropped, and, later still, Church authority took its place. The Reformation again brought the true principle into prominence, and rested dogma on its proper basis, the Divine authority of the Christian revelation.

It is true that in many of the Confessions referred to the definitions and explanations widely differ from those of other creeds; but this very fact gives to the testimony itself its irrefragable cogency. There is method in the diversity. With the exception of the Eastern and Roman Churches, all the other Confessions agree in essentials and differ only in circumstantials: in other words, their faith is the same, and they only differ on questions of Church government and discipline. Beneath an apparent discrepancy there exists a real substantial identity. With the Eastern and Roman Churches it is different: there the differences are in essentials and the resemblances in circumstantials. With the exception of the claim of Church supremacy, the three bodies—the Church of England, the Eastern Church, and the Church of Rome—mainly agree in circumstantials, but they widely and vitally

differ in essentials. Accepting the same articles, they interpret and define them so differently that they really become different dogmas, as wide apart as light and darkness. But it must be recollected, that while these two Churches corrupt the faith with dogmas rejected by the Protestant Churches, they teach all that the Protestant Churches teach. Up to a certain point—the point defined in the Nicene Creed—the objects of belief are identical. Within these limits, therefore, lies the one immutable creed of the Church of all ages, “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

Now let the whole body of dogmatic truth as taught in the visible Church of Christ, whether it be true or whether it be false, be considered together. Whatever we may think of the doctrine, let us view the whole as one stream; then let us trace it backward to its fountain-head, and see what happens. The process is the same as tracing a river to its source. We wish to know whence it derives its waters; we therefore trace it carefully up the stream, and note where every branch separates, to the right hand or to the left. No stream that falls in along the course can form any part of the original waters; we therefore let it alone, and steadily pursue the central current, till we reach the spot where it flows out of the broad lake or the precipitous mountain's side. Let us do the same thing with the dogmatic teaching of the Church; we shall then see which branch traces its original furthest back and forms part of the parent stream.

We scarcely commence the process before one doctrine is separated from the mass and falls behind us. The dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary reaches no further back than our own memories [10]. Steadily tracing the course of time backwards, the dogma of purgatorial fire branches off about the middle of the sixteenth century, and dies away as a formal doctrine about the middle of the twelfth [11]. In the early part of the fifteenth century the mutilation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by taking away the cup from the laity, disappears [12]. A little further back, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, we find transubstantiation for the first time dogmatically taught, and in another two or three centuries all traces of it are lost again [13]. In the twelfth century five of the seven sacraments disappear, and the two "ordained by Christ Himself" alone survive [14]. In the ninth century the power of canonisation for the first time falls into the stream of doctrine, although the tendency to saint-worship and to incipient Mariolatry reaches further backward [15]. In the beginning of the sixth century the Papal supremacy is left behind, and with it the last formal trace of the corrupt dogmas of the East and the West [16].

We have reached a date still distant from the Council of Nice. Nearly three hundred years must be traced back till then. Yet we have already left behind all that separates us from the Greek and Roman Churches. We have seen at what dates

their doctrines one by one arose, and where they fell into the central stream. We now stand far above them, and yet the river itself has become no scanty stream, no trickling brook, weak and shallow. It yet flows on, a river of truth, deep, broad, and strong, only the swifter because the banks have narrowed on either side. Still we trace it back, the faith of our own beloved Church and the faith of the Nicene Fathers flowing together, a stream of truth one and indistinguishable.

And now we have reached Nicæa, and yet we have not arrived at the fountain-head. Thirteen creeds or fragments of creeds still lie between us and the first parent spring of all, bearing the same general character, reflecting the same truths. Further back therefore flows the river. The original spring is still beyond us; although every voice now loudly proclaims where it is, and what. Still we take no man's word, but from saint to saint carefully trace the current to its source. Further back than the time of Irenæus the line of descent for a brief period becomes comparatively obscure. Intimations of a formal definite creed may be found in Ignatius, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, but they are fragmentary and uncertain. The period is like some reach of the earthly stream, where, amid the precipitous rocks and overhanging woods, its exact course cannot be positively traced. A little further on and the full river breaks into view again. We tread with reverent hearts and holy fear, for we are close to the fountain-head. We are looking into

the first century of the Christian era, and here we find the abysmal depth whence the glorious river flows. It may be traced yet further back indeed even than this, but it is through secret channels, through type and symbol and ceremony and prophecy, with the clear light of day breaking upon it here and there ; but rather like a river flowing underground than like a river in the full light of day, challenging by the strength of its first rush and the loud music of its flowing depths the eyes and ears of men. We are looking into the first century. Let us as it were go round, and get, so to speak, at the back of the cavernous profound whence the stream of truth rushes into the daylight. Let us go back to the year 750 of Rome, and behold ! the open river is not. Somehow in that mysterious century it has its earthly birth. Here, explain it how you will, here, for an historical certainty, the faith begins. This admits of no denial. The proofs that the articles of the Nicene Creed are deduced from the Scriptures exist in the familiar text-books of the University. Whatever may be concluded as to the character of the Scriptures, it is certain that they and the faith sprang into being together ; and their birthday is in the period to which step by step I have traced the genealogy back. We stand, as it were, looking at the depths mysterious, yawning beneath and before the eye, inscrutable and unfathomable, whence the waters spring into the daylight. Look and watch and wonder. What spring is capacious enough to have given them birth ? The

channel itself we can see to be human as ourselves, though of finer and purer soil, as if the ever-gushing fountains of truth close by had clothed it with perennial beauty and verdure. Whence it issues the outward eye cannot see. The spring is there where no human hand can reach, no human foot can tread. It lies in the unseen, not the seen. Stand and watch the waters. All the dear familiar truths are there, known to us from our childhood, almost the very words in which the Church is accustomed to express them. How sweetly, purely, freshly, vigorously they well forth from the fountain infinite, for that fount is—God.

Here then we find both the witness to the fact and the fact itself coincident. The Church from the very beginning to the very end has consistently declared herself to be in possession of a sacred gift of truth, a solemn charge from God. Had the faith entrusted to her been lost, we might have regarded the assertion as the instinct of an ignorant fanaticism or the extravagance of a self-exalting pride. But here the faith is, traceable from our own days to the days of the Apostles, unchanged and unchangeable. The facts are plain historical facts; they lie within the reach of any man's examination. In the face of them to speak of dogmas as the modern creation of the Church, to refer them to the sixteenth century, or to the Schoolmen or to the ancient Fathers, is either ignorance or carelessness. To put out of view the plain fact that the dogmatic faith and the Scriptures synchronise, and must either

be accepted together or rejected together, is a gross injustice.

The theory of the Scriptures and the actual facts of human history are consistent with each other throughout. It is useless to battle against the theory, unless the hand of the objector can also sweep away the facts. The marvellous coincidence between the two is itself a fact, pervading all the other facts; and it penetrates through the distant haze of time and the shifting lights and shadows of human events, as if it were a smile from the face of Christ Himself, the shining of His cloudless light and truth who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

LECTURE III

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

EPH. ii. 12

Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world

THE existence of the dogmatic faith as an historical fact is wholly independent of any opinion that may be formed regarding its origin or character. The fact rests on precisely the same evidence as the ordinary facts of history. A series of writings, genuine and authentic beyond controversy, reach from the present time back to the first century of the Christian era, and attest, at each successive stage of the descent, alike the existence of the faith and its identity. Two further questions immediately arise: whence this faith has been derived, and what is the amount of its authority. The latter question is involved in the former. The range of enquiry is limited to the first three centuries of the Christian era. Evidence of the strongest character may be adduced for referring the origin of the faith to a date earlier than the Council of Nice, for the ante-Nicene Fathers

reach back to the close of the first century. At this date they themselves refer the origin of their faith to the sacred Scriptures, which must therefore necessarily have been anterior to their own time. But without pressing this fact to the utmost, it must in any case be admitted that the origin of the Christian faith must be traced to a period earlier than the third century after Christ. The Nicene Creed fixes this date. For here we find the doctrines of the faith not diffused through various books, or latent in reference and allusion, but already formulated and methodised, expressed in a strict theological language, and classified in a logical synthetic order. A considerable period of time must have elapsed before the faith could have created its own language, literature, and organisation.

But is the account given by the Church of the beginning of her own faith credible and true? She has ever consistently affirmed that she received it by revelation from God, through men specially inspired for that purpose. Inasmuch as the revelation so given includes all things necessary for faith and practice, it can admit neither of enlargement nor diminution. It is therefore dogmatic *ex hypothesi*, because it was delivered by authority of God, not gained by discovery of man; and what man in no way created, man can in no way change. This is the account given by the Church. That the saints themselves devoutly believed it to be true is proved by the sacrifices they made for it, the devotedness of their lives, and the heroic constancy of their

deaths. But perhaps they were themselves deceived. Such is the suggestion of modern rationalism, and several natural influences have been specified, to which it is believed that the origin of Christianity can be much more rationally referred, than to a supernatural revelation. My object is to test these supposed causes one by one, and examine their adequacy to produce a result so memorable as the faith, and effects so wide in their reach and so ennobling in their character, as the results of Christian civilisation.

It is not enough in answering this question to trace the faith back to the Scriptural books, or to show that every article is either clearly contained in the Holy Scriptures, or gathered from it. The character of the Scriptures themselves is called into discussion. According to the modern idea, they are not the creators of the faith, but the product of it, the embodiment of the religious consciousness of a particular period of the world. The faith therefore and the books containing it are involved in the same suspicion, and must be considered together. The question is thus rendered more specific. The faith and the Scriptures must stand on one side, and the cause producing them, whatever it may be, on the other. The cause must precede the effect, and be distinguishable from it, however much they may act and react on each other.

Foremost among the causes alleged to have been operative, is the religious instinct. That a religious sense or sentiment or emotion, whichever it may be called, exists in the human heart independently of

the dogmatic faith contained in the sacred books, is undeniable. It has been found to exist where the books are unknown and the specific religious doctrines of Christianity have never been preached. A belief of some kind in a deity of some kind, if not absolutely universal to all known tribes of heathendom, is, at all events, almost universal. Sometimes it is a dim superstition, vague and terrible, such as holds in chains the benighted heart of suffering Africa ; a formless, shapeless dread of evil spirits, the more oppressive because it cannot be reduced into definite form or brought within the reach of the understanding. Sometimes it is a dark monotheism, because it is the worship of a great spirit, terrible not beautiful in his attributes, dreadful not glorious in his doings. Sometimes it is a gross polytheism, not only shaping the powers of nature into a host of divinities, but tracing the spark of deity in dead things and objects revolting and offensive. Sometimes it is a worship of the Evil One, conceived in fear, and finding expression in the fires of the Phœnician Moloch or the dreadful sacrifices of the Mexican divinities. But whatever may be its special shape, a religious belief of some kind, associated with some form of inward consciousness and outward worship, has ever been found to constitute a characteristic of the heathen world, whether in the heart of huge continents or in smiling islands green in everlasting beauty, whether beneath the heat of the tropics or amid the everlasting snows and ice-bound solitudes of the pole.

It was long supposed that no exception whatever existed to this common consciousness of the human soul. Christian apologists have been in the habit of arguing on this supposition. The assertion can no longer be very confidently maintained in this extreme form. One exception is asserted to exist, although it must be admitted that the evidence is as yet partial and inconclusive. The Andamanese are said to have no religion [I]. Should the fact be established, it modifies the Christian argument to a certain extent, but strengthens it in the modification. If a religious consciousness were an universal attribute of man, it would justify a belief in an innate religious sense, constitutional and congenital, and by the creating will of God inseparable from the structure of the soul itself. Some religion would then be antecedent to all revelation. But if its existence be only general and not absolutely universal, the consciousness can no longer be considered to be a part of the soul itself, but something bestowed upon it from without, that is from above. The first origin of our religious ideas must be transferred from nature to revelation. The religious constitution of the soul would consist in its receptivity, being like a sensitive photographic plate affected by the most delicate ray of light, but in the absence of that ray to evoke its latent capacities blank and empty. In this case the all but universality of the tradition would establish the primeval unity of the human race with a force of evidence little short of demonstration.

At all events the religious consciousness is general, if no more [2]. It is the tendency of modern thought to regard this sentiment as religion, and as its only essential and eternal element [3]. Religion is thus sharply severed from theology ; for theology is the science of revealed dogmas, and revealed dogmas are asserted to be no part of religion. Religion is therefore regarded as one thing, and theology as another. Doctrines, points of specific belief, are considered to be human incrustations on religion, and not a part of it. Religion is the first antecedent cause, a flame burning brightly in the human soul where it is not darkened by what are esteemed to be the theories of priestcraft or the credulities of superstition. This religious consciousness is therefore the one formative principle of which all religious systems are but distorted developments, the offspring of ignorance or of imposture. In the dark times of the past the imperfect acquaintance with the natural created an ignorant belief of the supernatural. What men did not understand was supposed to be miraculous. Thus they referred to unseen agents of another world what we now know to be the result of natural and ordinary causes. Physical science has dissipated these delusions, and by resolving back the superstitions of the past into the results of its ignorance is enabled to strip the false from the face of the true, and to present once more the original and universal religion in its purity and grace.

Thus modern thought pleads. In order to bring the assertion to the test of examination, let us

analyse the sentiment itself, and ascertain to what it amounts. For if it is to be considered as the germinal source of all religious action, it must have substance and reality. A mere feeling, vague, dim, and formless, too indefinite to be stated in a proposition, can scarcely be deemed sufficient by any one to satisfy the wants of the soul; still less sufficient to produce out of itself an elaborate system of belief; still less to exercise a moral discipline over the passions and irregular impulses of man. A subjective emotion with no reality to answer to it can scarcely be the religion of a rational and immortal being. The very lights and shadows that come and go over the landscape and leave no trace behind on the earth they darken into gloom or paint with ten thousand hues of beauty, have a substance and a life and a cause. A religious emotion devoid of dogma, but beginning and ending as an emotion, is more unreal even than they. It is absolutely unsubstantial—a thing causeless and self-created, not only without a form but even without a name, indistinguishable as the spectral shadow of death conceived by the genius of Milton—

“If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either.”

The very conception of such a religion is a contradiction to the constitution of the human soul. We are endowed with the capability of feeling and with

an exquisite sensitiveness of emotion. But there must ever be something to call the feeling and the emotion into existence, some reality to which they more or less accurately correspond. Were the case otherwise, the soul would be a mere region of ghosts. There are indeed feelings and sensations that come and go over the soul, so subtle in their nature and so dependent on fine and secret sympathies, that we cannot always analyse them. So difficult is it sometimes to perceive their connexion with recognised thought, or their dependence on any known law of our mental selves, that they appear as if they were reflections out of the unseen world, shadows cast upon the soul's finer powers by realities lying as yet equally beyond the reach of the senses and the comprehension of the intellect. But this very feeling is the unconscious witness of the understanding that there are realities corresponding with them somewhere. For the intellect and the heart of man are cast after all upon the same mould. The intellect is unable to conceive objects attested by no past experience, direct or indirect. An object wholly different from anything we have ever seen or known by our own knowledge or by the description of others, could neither be conceived in thought nor expressed in words. Feeling follows in this respect the same law as thought. Itself more quick and subtle, more spontaneous and variable, it can no more spring out of the non-existing than thought can do. Somewhere or other, even should the sphere be too deep for analysis, must exist realities to which feeling

corresponds. In the absence of all knowledge of the reality, the feeling itself would die. Anything different from this would be creation, and any being not subject to this law would be God, not man [4].

Now let it be borne in mind that if Divine realities exist and are known to exist, dogma must exist likewise. Dogma is but the statement of truth, and acquires its positive character from the invariability of truth. To say that there is no dogma, is either to say that nothing Divine exists, or that nothing is known to exist. Let us try the religious sentiment by this test.

Either there is a reality corresponding to the sentiment, or there is not. There is, for instance, a religious feeling in the soul reaching out to a world unseen, and gathering itself, more or less definitely, around the notion of a Supreme Being. Either the unseen world and the Supreme Being exist, or they do not.

Let me first suppose that they exist. The existence must be known to us under modes and conditions. To state them is dogma; to know them is to know dogma. In proportion as they are known, the religious sentiment must shape itself into correspondence with them. It takes the form of love towards a being believed to be beautiful; or of fear towards a being believed to be terrible; or of trust towards a being believed to be kind and wise; or of cringing submission to a being believed to be cruel and severe. But in every such case the faith has become dogmatic, and the sentiment has moulded itself to the

dogma. But suppose that the unseen world and the Supreme Being do exist, but are not known. The mind guesses at their existence and its modes, the sensitive soul gropes in the darkness and feels if haply it might find them. In this state the religious sentiment remains a sentiment only because the reality is not discovered. The absence of dogma is simply the absence of knowledge, and the indefinite sentiment of the heart is the expression of the ignorance of the head. Is ignorance good, and to be coveted? Is it the nursing-mother of progress and civilisation? Is it the crown and climax of nineteen centuries of definite knowledge and positive revelation? But if religion be the sentiment without the dogma, this is the inevitable conclusion. Then indeed the sneer of the infidel is true, and religion altogether is but the superstition of the ignorant or the idle credulity of the fool.

But let the other alternative be considered. Let it be said that the religious sentiment is undogmatic, not because we do not know the world unseen, but because there is no such world to be known. No reality exists to which the religious sentiment corresponds. Does it not follow in this case that the sentiment is unreal likewise, a creation of the imagination, a vague sense of moral want, reaching after what is not and never has been, a sentiment as wholly without power as it is without vitality?

Yet to this religion itself is reduced when separated from dogma, that is, from theology. Let the doctrines be stripped away, and nothing remains but

the sentiment. If religion be prior and superior to theology, it must of course be distinct from it. To see what religion is on this supposition we must take theology away. The Trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead; the creative work and claims of the Father; the eternal Deity of the Son; His incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, session in glory, return to judgment and final kingdom; the procession of God the Holy Ghost; His work in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the conversion and sanctification of the heart,—must all be rejected, for these are the technical propositions of the Nicene Creed. With them must be rejected the resurrection of the body, the future judgment, and heaven and hell, as directly asserted; and the fall of man, the depravity of the heart, and the necessity of atonement and regeneration as indirectly implied. But when all these truths are gone, all definite religious motives are gone likewise, because all definite belief is gone. The Church of Christ in the enjoyment of her glorious faith was like Israel in the midst of a goodly land of fountains and depths springing out of valleys and hills. But now the Church has gone back into the wilderness, with no grand heights to break the dead monotony, no rich vegetation to gratify the eye, no pleasant streams of joy and holy hope to make it rich in love and musical with praise.

When religion has thus been separated from all theology, what remains of religion itself? It has become naked Theism. It may be an enlightened

Theism, compared to the belief of ancient times, for the unconscious influence of Christian truth has moulded men's modes of thinking, in regard to Divine things, too deeply to admit of its being shaken off. Thus the God of modern thought is not the terrible Deity of ancient paganism or of savage idolatry in modern times, but distinctively a God of benevolence and love. The whole tendencies of modern feeling have thus far coloured our conception of the Deity, and the knowledge obtained of the marvellous adaptations of the material world have aided in transforming the frightful Theism of ancient times into the beautiful and light-clothed angel of our own day. But this mode of feeling has itself grown up under the sheltering wing of Christian dogma, and has never existed to the full apart from it.

This Theism has, moreover, an inevitable tendency to give less and less prominence to the personality of God in proportion as positive dogma relative to the Divine Being is more and more merged in subjective sentiment. It resolves itself in a great degree into Pantheism, for prominent among the dogmas rejected as human perversions of the religious sentiment, is the belief in the supernatural. But what is called the supernatural is nothing more than the interference of the Divine Personality in the course of human things, modifying by His agency the operation of His own laws, just as man himself modifies them by his personal agency in every production of his skill, and every action of his life. In the place of personal

action is substituted natural law, supposed to be constant and invariable, and therefore to supersede the possibility of a Divine interference.

The very conception will, I believe, be found on an accurate analysis to be unphilosophical, and therefore untrue. For it rests on a confusion between a law and the power enacting a law. A law is itself not a power, but a product; the expression of a will which stands towards it as an antecedent to a consequent. As ordinarily used by the ablest of the modern school, it represents a mere summary of effects rather than the operation of a cause; the statistical statement of a fact rather than the explanation of an efficient energy. But on this I cannot dwell. My present purpose is only to remark that in denying the personal agency of God in human things we practically deny the personality itself; we relegate it to the sphere of the unknown and the unpractical. In proportion as we substitute natural law for personal agency we merge Theism into Pantheism.

Nor is this all. For if the Theism be definite, that is, if it be founded on a belief in positive truths relative to the Divine existence, nature, and character, in that proportion dogma still survives. Dogma is the formal statement of a positive belief, and to get rid of the dogma we must get rid of the belief. All the sharp lines defining our conceptions of God must therefore be taken away, for all these are dogmatic. Guesses too uncertain to be asserted, and speculations too vague to be defined, alone remain. The

statement of "what is" is changed into the stammering and hesitating suggestion of something that "may be." The Theism itself becomes subjective only, a thing of many shapes and forms, which chameleon-like changes its colours with the mental and moral peculiarities of the thinker.

Here we find the answer to another plea lying in the course of my argument. The ultimate end of all religion is confessed to be God, and its ultimate object union of the soul with God. If the soul by its own inherent powers of thought and feeling can attain to this union, by intuitive instinct or meditation, as the Neo-Platonists believed, why argue for the retention of dogmatic truth as a means of this union when the union can be attained without it? If there may be an immediate contact of heart and affection between man and God, why do we need this elaborate system of belief. In ancient times, when the human intellect was less enlightened, when the soul knew less of its own wondrous gifts and far-reaching capacities, when the laws of its own operations and of the outer world around it were alike unknown, the aid of dogmas may have been necessary. But the human mind has now outlived the need, and allying itself by an immediate sentiment of religion with God, indignantly flings away the effete doctrines of the past, as the man rejects in the maturity of his strength the toys of his childhood. The result previously shown to follow on the separation of religion from theology has already suggested the answer. We acknowledge that union with God is the ultimate

object of religion ; but we deny that a sentimental Theism is competent to produce it.

Such an union must depend either on intellectual conception, or on moral sympathy, or on both. But intellectual conception cannot exist where there is no knowledge of the facts of the Divine nature and character. Without the doctrines contained in the Bible we know nothing for certain of God. He may be a glorious Being, reposing idly from everlasting to everlasting in the abysses of His own sublime self-consciousness and never emerging into contact with human things. He may be a dreadful Fate, marching on His inexorable way utterly indifferent to the joys or sorrows of the individual men and women making up the great total of humanity. He may be a mere name for the sum of all things, an abstract idea of human creation. We know not. Having rejected all dogma we are absolutely in the dark, and neither know anything for certain nor can know anything for certain. We have barred the very portals of the temple of truth against our own entrance, for directly we gain positive truths we get dogma, and are thus endlessly involved in the meshes of our own self-contradictions. There can be no intellectual conception where there is no definite notion, and there can be no intellectual contemplation where there is no intellectual conception,

Nor can moral sympathy survive, where there is no knowledge of the qualities of the Being with whom we are to sympathise. If we know nothing about God, His attributes may be shocking to us,

and utterly alien from everything in ourselves, for aught we know to the contrary. If this cannot be, and we say such a Being cannot be our God, then we are slipping back into dogma again, although it be but a dogma of our own. We become creators of an ideal Being, and with him we sympathise. That ideal is but a reflection of the intellectual and moral self. In other words, we sympathise with ourselves, not with God.

I can conceive one other objection, and only one other, capable of being urged against the conclusion that if we destroy dogma we destroy religion:—if we admit religion we must admit dogma. It may be said that I am too sweeping in my conclusions, that the objection is not against all dogma but only against Christian dogma, the particular system of theological doctrines deduced from the Scriptures and dependent upon their authority. The relation existing between the technical statement of these truths by the Church and the teaching of the Scriptures will remain for future consideration. Meanwhile, let it be seen whether it be possible in objecting to dogma as dogma, to draw a line short of the rejection of all positive belief, and if it be, at what point it can be drawn. Look round the whole range of religious belief and see what common truths there are concerning God and our relations towards Him which are not included in the circle of revealed doctrine. I believe you will not find a solitary one. There are certain common features traceable in the religious sentiment found to exist universally among mankind, with one

possible exception, all the world over. But every one of these is contained in the Scriptural theology, and is dependent on it for its definiteness and authentication. Moreover all these features, with one exception, are earnestly repudiated by the free thought of our day, and can therefore form no part of its original and undogmatic religion.

Thus a belief in the doctrine of human sin may be traced alike amid the traditions of savage idolatry and the speculations of Pagan philosophy. But modern free thought indignantly rejects it, and considers the notion of an hereditary stain, or of an inherent depravity of all mankind, to be among the most monstrous of dogmas. Thus a belief in the necessity for an atonement, sometimes expressed in a manner shocking to all the instincts of human affection, has existed as widely as human nature itself. But this also modern free thought rejects, denying atonement in any sense of a vicarious sacrifice, and only admitting it, if at all, in the sense of moral reconciliation. Thus a belief in some kind of purgative process, to be accomplished on human nature before it can find access to a holy Deity, is co-extensive with the faintest traces of religious sentiment, however external and superficial the sentiment may be. But this too modern free thought rejects, holding that man needs no other intercessor than himself; no other purification than the honesty of his own search after truth. Thus a belief in a future life of rewards and punishments has been found to exist alike amid the jungles of the tropics

and the sterile solitudes of the North, in the heart of terror-stricken Africa and among the splendid savages inhabiting the sunny isles of the Pacific. But this likewise modern free thought rejects as equally dishonourable to the goodness of God and offensive to the just independence of man.

Now these four beliefs, as they exist among the heathen, are the traditional remains of great truths originally given by revelation. In what I may call their natural state they are dim shadows, and Christian dogma gives them permanent form and reality. Thus the doctrine of human sin is explained by the narrative of the creation and the fall ; the doctrine of the atonement is copiously illustrated and cleared of all its shocking human perversions by the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings and death of the God incarnate ; the acknowledgment of man's need of a purgation finds its complement and satisfaction in the doctrine relative to the person and work of God the Holy Ghost ; the belief in future rewards and punishments is realised in the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection and the judgment, and heaven and hell.

One doctrine alone remains held in common by modern free thought and by the Christian faith ; I refer to the belief in the merciful and benevolent attributes of God. I fully admit that a man is quite free, while he rejects the great mass of Christian dogma because it appears to him to be in itself incredible, to accept this one dogma of the Divine goodness and benevolence because it appears to him

to be in itself credible. There is nothing inconsistent in such a position logically considered, but it must be modified by other considerations.

Thus it may justly be urged that in rejecting the doctrines of salvation we deprive ourselves of the great evidence of the Divine love. The proof from creation remains, but unless supplemented by the proof from redemption, is not strong enough for conviction. For if on one side there are in creation and Providence clear traces of goodness, there are also traces equally clear of severity and chastisement. As a matter of fact, persons have become Atheists because they have been unable to reconcile the apparent disorder and miseries of life with the existence of a benevolent God [5]. It must, I think, be admitted that if the disciplinary purposes of the present state, as revealed in Scripture, are lost sight of, the problem is an embarrassing one.

It may be further urged, as a matter of experience, that those who, out of the natural sentiment of religion, believe in a God, do not always believe in His goodness and benevolence, but more frequently in His harshness and severity. Hence the evidence from nature for the goodness of God cannot be very conclusive, or it would have been universally admitted.

It may be further urged that a belief in the merciful and benevolent attributes of God, as held apart from Christian dogma, is founded on a denial of His attributes of holiness and justice. A God made up of love, and love alone, loses His claims on

reverence and worship, and becomes contemptible ; since an indiscriminating love, recognising no distinction of good or bad, worthiness or unworthiness, in its objects, is deprived of its moral character, and becomes mere easiness of disposition. An ideal God of love alone, instead of being higher and nobler than man, becomes lower and weaker than man, and must be wholly incapable of influencing or elevating a nature already superior to himself.

These considerations may be urged with great force and conclusiveness. But I do not press them now, being content with the acknowledgment that a religion severed from theology can be nothing higher than a Theism, and this Theism vague, indefinite, and uncertain. I have separated one by one the dogmas of theology from what is said to be religion, and now that the process is completed, nothing remains but a sentiment, not a creed ; a purely subjective emotion ; a shadow without a substance, a form without a life, a name without a power.

But it is said, that this, and this alone, is religion, the divine spark in man's soul, that all dogmas are but the incrustations formed by ignorance or priestcraft around the divine original ; that this sentiment is prior and superior to theology, since definite doctrines are the variable forms in which the religious consciousness has developed itself in different stages of the world's education ; that it is, in fact, the formative principle of all doctrine. Claims so high and lofty make it necessary for us still to keep the eyes steadily fixed on the sentiment, till we can measure all

its proportion and test its worth by the evidence of the past. In doing this, I must adopt new names. To consent to this separation of the sentiment from the doctrine, and call the first religion, and the second theology, is to do an injustice to Christianity, and to religion itself. I can therefore no longer admit that the holy name "religion" belongs to the vague and dreamy sentiment alone surviving after the elimination of Christian doctrine. I can neither exalt the sentiment into a divine reality, nor degrade the doctrine into a human system. I shall therefore designate the one as the religious sentiment, and the other as the religious dogma.

The inevitable tendency of the sentiment, deprived of the doctrine, is to lose its religious character altogether. It is, consequently, incapable of maintaining its own life. I do not deny that it may survive in any one particular man while thought and consciousness survive. The human soul is endowed with a strange power of living in a world of its own, and peopling it with ideal inhabitants. But I mean that such a sentiment, in the process of its transmission from mind to mind, has an irresistible tendency to lose its sacred character, and from a religion to become a philosophy. Religion deals with the relation between man and God, but where no definite knowledge of God exists, the soul falls back upon itself. It leaves what it does not know of the Divine, for what it does know of the human. Thus it drops its theistic character and merges itself into the love of the true and the good, and the

beautiful—a kind of moral and intellectual æstheticism, in which the soul itself is at once worshipper and temple, subject and Deity. It is an apotheosis of human nature, and the result is not a religion, for it has no relation to God, but a philosophy.

To this sequel the religion of sentiment has already passed among ourselves, and the change is avowed with no doubting or hesitating lips. A change more momentous cannot be conceived. Could it become universal it would be a destruction of Christianity, for what would an empty name avail when the reality was gone? We should have a new dogma, but a dogma of morals not of religion, of earth not of heaven. The sacred name of the Saviour of the world would ring no more from the pulpit, and would be hushed in the language of our devotion. The ministry would no longer witness, trumpet-tongued, before the world to the solemn realities of the soul, and God, and sin, and the Saviour, and judgment, and heaven, and hell; but in their place would sound the dull platitudes of sentiment or the cold speculations of morality. Christian learning, losing its noblest theme, would lose its breadth and vigour, as they were lost in the middle ages. Here, in this University, our loftiest subject would be the *τὸ ἀγαθόν* and *τὸ καλόν* of Aristotle, or the primal ideas of Plato; if for such a dull level of humanity his idealistic philosophy would not be too spiritual. And what amid this spreading and universal darkness, what would become of the human soul and of its inalienable wants and instincts?

We must not forget, in tracing the effects of such a change, that the message of salvation is ever described in the Word as a remedy for an actual and specific ruin. We are taught that man is as far as possible gone from original righteousness, "that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and therefore that in every man born into the world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation;" that we can be justified "by faith only," "for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" that Christ will come again "to judge all men at the last day." These are not my words, but the words of the doctrinal articles of our Church.

I do not forget that all these are Christian dogmas, and that upon the supposition that the religious sentiment is alone to be cultivated, all these dogmas would be swept away as things of the past. But there are instincts in the human soul and conscience, hopes and fears, glimpses of unseen things and awful anticipations of a world to come, that will not submit themselves to any speculative control. They will make themselves felt every now and then, stirring the depths of our nature so strongly that even the sceptical education of a lifetime will not always eradicate them. It cannot be said that they are the products of Christian dogma, and would cease to be felt when Christian dogma had been swept away; for they have been coeval with man himself, and have existed at periods and in spots where no conceivable influence of Christian teaching can have called them into life. Beneath the most utter

stagnation of the human intellect and conscience they have still made themselves felt. It must be admitted to be the province of religion to meet and satisfy them, to answer these awful questionings of life and death, to allay these tremendous fears of the future, to appease these dreadful conflicts. What can the empty sentiment do in this emergency of our nature? To talk of the good and true and beautiful to a conscience shaken with the sense of sin and the alarms of judgment; to parade empty feelings when the soul is already groping in the dark beneath the first shadows of the world to come; to exalt human self to a heart sick with self and pining to its depths to escape from itself and to find God,—is as vain and empty a process as to feed a hungry man with the wind, and slake his devouring thirst with the sands of the desert.

It is the further work of religion to give force to moral obligations, and bring the instincts of our lower nature into subjection to the reason and the conscience. What can the sentiment of religion do to fulfil this office? We may as well bind the arms of a giant with fetters of sand as combat the wild and passionate impulses of human nature by æsthetic proprieties and abstract love of the beautiful. The tremendous truth of an over-seeing and avenging God, of a future judgment and an eternal recompense of good and evil, can scarcely abash the bold forehead of sin, and check its effrontery. But take them away, and the last authority would be stripped from morals. The very heathen felt this. Cicero

declared that morality would not survive the shock that destroyed religion. Modern thought catches up almost the very echo of his words ; for, sweeping away all dogmatic truth, it proclaims the advent of a new morality suited to the genial temper of that new theology which, by its own statement, is only a sentiment and not a theology at all. That the old morality cannot survive the destruction of the old dogmatic religion is certain. For if religion be the love of the good and the true, and the good and the true be tested by human nature, morality must follow suit with religion and become human likewise. But a morality based on human sanctions and drawn from human laws, must necessarily reflect the characteristics of the nature which has given it birth. If human nature be depraved, a morality of human nature must be depraved likewise.

Thus every argument asserts the absolute weakness and futility of a religion of sentiment alone. But the evidence of existing experience does not exhaust the case. The experiment is only imperfectly tried among ourselves, and amid the elevating and restraining influences of Christian doctrine. The theology of reason unconsciously borrows the ideas and even the language of the theology of revelation, although it disavows the shelter under which it has nestled. We must therefore appeal to the experience of human history under other circumstances. For common causes should produce common effects all the world over, especially if natural law be the only force in action, and if it be, according to the

modern theory, constant and uniform. If the theistic sentiment be the only pure and true religion, it should prove itself competent to fulfil the functions of religion. Its invariable tendency should be to self-preservation and self-expansion, to alliance with liberty, civilisation, and progress. There can be no influence in humanity itself to check this tendency; at least our opponents can make no appeal to it. For human nature, upon their theory, is a pure thing, ever tending towards perfection, and the notion of any hereditary disposition to error of opinion or mistakes of practice is indignantly described as no more than an exploded dogma of the past.

We turn to heathen lands. Here the testimony of the facts is too clear and positive to admit of doubt or to need reiteration. If the religious sentiment be religion, and Church dogmas are only a human corruption of it, then the less dogma there is, the purer should be the religion. The more powerful therefore should be its influence, and the more beneficent its effects. In the lands where definite religious doctrine least exists, human virtue, happiness, and peace should flourish most. The more undefined and vague the religious impression, the purer must it be, and the higher should be the condition of its votaries. It seems absurd gravely to argue such a question, for the identity of savagism and superstition is proverbial. Yet if a common sentiment of religion, without any dogmatic faith to give it definite direction, be the ideal of religion,

and religion be confessed to be good, it follows by a most absolute necessity that the less dogmatic religion you have, the more virtue and happiness you ought to have. I am not sure that some are not prepared openly to avow and defend this conclusion so far as happiness is concerned, and even so far as morality is concerned, monstrous as it would be, and contradictory to the most positive evidence of facts. For look where we will, the less religious knowledge exists the deeper is the general degradation. The course is downwards, not upwards. The tendency is not to a spontaneous activity, growing by its very luxuriance into definite systems of belief, but to an ever-deepening stagnation, losing what once it had or believes itself to have had. The result is not life, but torpor, silence, death [6].

But it may be urged that the fault in this case is not in the inability of the sentiment but in the degraded condition of the mind. On the theory that all mankind began their career in a state of savagism and have slowly worked their way upwards into civilisation, it may be maintained that the proper effect of the religious sentiment cannot be seen in the savage, but must be sought in the civilised. The rudeness and ignorance and ferocity of barbarous tribes have overlaid the religious sentiment with empty superstitions, and crushed its energy beneath the savage instincts of the animal man. But couple, it may be said, the sentiment with knowledge and learning on one side, and the humanising effects of an enlightened civilisation on the

other, and then you will see the original religion in its beauty, neither darkened by foolish dogma nor degraded by moral corruption. Most happily for the truth, it has pleased Divine Providence to supply the means of bringing this assertion to the test, and I adore the prescient wisdom which has equally closed up the avenues of scepticism by the barbarism of savage tribes and the full blaze of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisation.

Here we look at a civilisation which was, according to the Scriptural chronology, the growth of at least two thousand years, and according to some modern theories, of a period indefinitely greater. I do not pause on the character of this civilisation, for this remains for consideration from another point of view. I only refer at present to its effects, and to the evidence afforded by the undoubted facts of the past to the adequacy or inadequacy of a religious sentiment either to maintain its own life or to elevate the condition of mankind. During the successive waves of empire that have swept over the world since the deluge, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman, each inherited the advancement of its predecessor. It was not that the tide of progress flowed and then absolutely ebbed to the same point again, and that each wave rose independently, lived its own separate life, and died its own separate death. But the remnants of the one wave were in each case incorporated into the strength of the other. The magnificent Babylonian empire absorbed the Assyrian greatness into its own glory. The Persian spread

its shadowing wings in a wider flight, and drew its glory from a thousand tributary nations, but still included the more ancient civilisation within itself. The Greek infused its own keen life and restless enterprise to the furthest bounds of the known world. The Roman inherited all the rest, and welded it together by its own vast organisation and iron strength. At each stage the area of empire was extended, but included the same nationalities. The civilisation of the world at the Christian era was thus the inheritor of all that had gone before, the climax of the world's life, the culmination of its progress during all the preceding ages.

Of the intellectual greatness of this civilisation, it can be nowhere so unnecessary to speak as in this University, where we are taught to live over again the life of that great past, and incorporate into our own mental selves the force of its intellect, the acuteness of its reasoning, the riches of its learning, the subtlety of its thoughts, and the exquisite taste of its artistic genius. Its influence is ineradicably stamped upon the present. We yet look back with wondering astonishment at the blaze of light shining from Athens and Alexandria, from Tarsus and Pergamos, and at the height of voluptuous luxury reached in Corinth, and Antioch, and Rome. We have far outgrown their state, indeed, in some respects; but never has there been such a vigour of human genius as then, and never since, happily for the world, such a civilisation.

Here then, at all events, the religious sentiment had a fair field to display its powers. Certainly, on

the intellectual side of it, ancient philosophy made a sweep of popular superstitions clean enough to satisfy any man [7]. It stood just where modern thought, in its most advanced stage, stands at our own day. Neither did Socrates and Plato fall short of the position occupied by Colenso and Mill, by Michelet and Renan, by Strauss and Baur; neither do these advance, in the results of their philosophy, one step beyond Socrates and Plato. The ideas of the two periods, and almost the language, are identically the same. The scene is very different indeed. We must unravel two thousand years and more of the world's tangled history. The place is very different. We stand beneath the sunny skies of Attica, and breathe its fragrant air. Around us stretch the temples and arcades, the tapering columns and majestic structures of Athens. Shapes of beauty are on every side, and glancing towards the Acropolis we see the majestic figure of Minerva stretching her guardian shield in front of the Parthenon. The forms around us are strange to our eyes—majestic men, such as yet live in the imperishable sculptures of Phidias and Praxiteles. We walk through the groves of the Academy beneath the venerable shade of trees where Plato taught, or in the Stoa with Zeno, or along the flowery garden with Epicurus. The forms and faces and associations are those of the long-distant yesterday; but the ideas and the language are the ideas and language of to-day. We almost appear to catch the accents

of some well-known modern philosophers in the words of the men of that day, as Justin Martyr reports them: "The Divinity extends its care to the great whole and its several classes, but not to me or to you, to men as individuals. Therefore, it is useless to pray to Him, for all things recur according to the unchangeable law of an endless progression [8]." What is this but the latest modern discovery of invariable law, coming out of the grave where it was buried two thousand years ago? Let us listen again. The foundation idea of all anti-dogmatic thought sounds in our ears, and one of the most amiable of the ancients utters it: "The Divine religion is something imperishable, but its forms are subject to decay." So wrote the gentle and philosophic Plutarch, quoting the ancient Greek tragedians. A living voice echoes back the sentiment in Christianised words [9].

The civilisation of that day embraced, therefore, the identical principles of modern rationalism. It stood on the same platform, thought the same thoughts, used the same language. Yet what was the result when the religious sentiment thus worked clear of any embarrassing dogmas, and in the midst of the most voluptuous civilisation ever known to the world? There followed its own loss of life in an universal scepticism; its absolute impotence in an incredible profligacy unfathomable by modern conceptions; its touching and pathetic wretchedness in a heart, sick even unto death, and crying out in the anguish of its desolation for some better hope and

clearer teaching. From its depth of misery it looked and longed for the divine instruction modern philosophy contemptuously rejects, and pathetically mourned the ignorance and misery modern philosophy ostentatiously embraces[10].

The experiment of a religion without dogma has therefore been tried, and has failed. To try it over again would be the wantonness of incredulity, if the circumstances of our day did not render the attempt impracticable. Results accomplished in the past would be accomplished over again in the future. Philosophers who push the constancy of natural law into such an absolute invariability, as to eliminate the possible action of the Deity in human affairs, cannot suppose its operation to be irregular where the agencies are altogether human. Of all men else, they should be the slowest to distrust the experiences of the past. A religion without an authoritative creed has been tried, and has failed. The mass of mankind, unable to live without a creed of some kind, fell into a coarse and debasing polytheism. Higher minds either lost the religious sentiment altogether in losing definite belief, or retaining the sentiment fell into hopeless despondency alike of intellect and of heart, because, ever haunted by its influence, they vainly groped like men in the dark after the corresponding realities. The pen of inspiration in one graphic verse couples the cause and the effect together in the pathetic description of the ancient heathen : " Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the

covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Upon this darkness broke the light of Christianity, revealing a system of truth sharply defined and invested with absolute authority over faith and conscience. Christianity is essentially a religion of dogma, because it is essentially a religion of authority. It is scarcely possible to conceive a sharper contrast than exists between the speculative uncertainty of heathen philosophy and the calm assurance of Christian teaching. "He taught them as one having authority" is as true of the Gospel in its written form as it was of our Lord's personal teaching. But we must be careful not to be led away by the love of contrast into a misapprehension of the facts. Heathenism cultivated the religious sentiment without religious dogma, but Christianity does not teach religious dogma without religious sentiment. Heathenism held morality without doctrine, but Christianity does not hold doctrine without morality. The contrast has often been stated in this form, but most falsely. The faith is so far from setting up what men believe in opposition to what men do, that it presents right belief and right practice as inseparable. Religious affections supply the link between them. The faith, made powerful by the Spirit of God to quicken the will and enlighten the conscience, first awakens the affections and through them directs and sanctifies the life.

Dogmatic Christianity has thus accomplished what speculative heathenism failed to do. It came, giving

definite shape to what was good and true in the existing convictions of mankind, establishing what was uncertain and ambiguous, and sweeping absolutely away what was false and superstitious. It cleared away the clouds from ancient truths and allied itself with all the longing hopes of the human soul. It thus gave humanity a new life. It did not begin with a sentiment, and out of the sentiment proceed to develop the doctrine; but it began with the doctrine, and by means of it gave energy and elevation to the sentiment. If anywhere the sentiment did not exist, the faith called it into existence. Where it existed, it explained it by revealing the eternal realities to which it vaguely corresponded. It came therefore as the superior, not the inferior. The revealed dogma and not the sentiment is the spring and primal source of the Divine life, because the Spirit of Life first gives the doctrine and then works by it. Christianity has triumphed hitherto because it is dogmatic, and supplies in that very dogma the yearning wants of human nature. With this it has already revolutionised the world and inaugurated the visible kingdom of Christ upon earth. With this are bound up all the hopes of the Church for the present and her prospects for the future, when the inchoate work shall be completed and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Both sides of the contrast, the failure of a religious sentiment without dogma and the triumph of religious dogma quickening and exalting the sentiment,

are eloquent with the same lesson. Religion cannot survive without a creed. In its absence the religious sentiment itself vanishes and dies. It would be as reasonable to expect a shadow without a substance as a religious influence without a religious faith. The necessity lies deep in the very constitution of our nature. To reject dogma is to reject religion.

LECTURE IV

THE FAITH AND THE INTUITIONS

JOB xi. 7

*Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the
Almighty unto perfection?*

RELIGION cannot survive without a creed. The religious sentiment, deprived of its natural foundation in dogma, loses its definite shape, evaporates and dies. Love cannot exist without a knowledge of the character and qualities of the Being to be loved. Fear can possess no intelligent character without definite acquaintance with the object of fear, and the reasons why He should be feared. Gratitude springs from the sense of benefits received and from the contemplation of the generous benevolence of the Benefactor. Desire must be directed to a special object if it is to be real and operative. Worship is the expression of a recognised relation of dependent inferiority between the worshipper and the Worshipped. Reverence and adoration can only be kindled by the consciousness of a Being competent to claim them by the glory of His attributes. In every case the affection is called out by some

corresponding truth. The hand which sweeps away the truth necessarily strangles the affections.

As the life of the affection depends upon the existence of truth, so also are its intensity and force exactly proportioned to the definiteness and certainty of the truth. The shapeless substance will ever produce a shapeless shadow. The most vague and dreary superstition may be traced back to certain definite beliefs. The horrible dread of witchcraft, for instance, which haunts the fear-shaken savages of equatorial Africa, springs out of the belief in the existence of malevolent spirits and their willingness to become the instruments of the evil passions of man. In proportion as the object of belief is undefined, the belief itself becomes unreal and therefore uninfluential. For this reason it is that I have called the religious instinct, found to exist throughout the human race, a sentiment and not an affection, because in the absence of definite knowledge it is itself devoid of definite shape. It would be to dishonour our nature to call this vague and dim instinct an affection. It is a sentiment at once as dark and shapeless as the shadows of the other world out of which it springs.

Moreover, all experience proves that the minds of men are influenced as much by the certainty as by the magnitude of the objects presented to them. All mankind are influenced by appeals from without. Minds of a higher order are distinguished from others of a lower only by the greater nobility of their objects. Some seek the gratification of the

loftier and purer parts of their nature, and others the gratification of the lower. But in the calculation of gain or loss, hope is in every case excited less by the extent of the reward, and fear less by the extent of the punishment, than by their certainty. A heavier penalty with a chance of escape from it affects men less than a lesser penalty with a moral certainty of its infliction. The same thing is true of religious motives as of secular. The mind is moved by truths in proportion to the vividness with which they are presented, and the evidence by which they commend themselves to the understanding. An intense dream affects the feelings of the sleeper, but exercises no influence whatever over the waking thoughts. The noblest ideas, if they are ideas alone and not realities, will be outweighed, to the vast majority of men, by the smallest practical certainty of life.

It is necessary, therefore, in order to keep the religious sentiment alive and develop it into affections, to present religious truth in such a definite shape as the mind can grasp, the memory retain, and the heart appreciate, and at the same time to invest it with certitude. Yet more necessary is this in order to give the sentiment force and strength enough to control the passions, form the character, and regulate the conduct. All loopholes of escape must be stopped, and the conscience brought face to face with realities so sure and great as to abash, before their own majesty, the arrogance of self-will and the selfishness of self-indulgence. The dogmas of the Christian faith are invested to an extraordinary

degree with both these characteristics. They are at once broad and simple enough for the comprehension of the most ignorant, and yet have heights and depths about them surpassing the grasp of the profoundest intellect. They come to the conscience invested with a Divine authority. The faithfulness of Him who is a God of truth, the omniscience of Him to whose piercing eyes all things in heaven and earth are open, and the authority of Him who is Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, King, Father, and Judge in one indivisible Deity, are pledged for their certainty. The evidences constituting the credentials of the faith bear on them the visible signature of God. The inspired records of the faith speak with a confident authority unknown to any human books. Their sanctions are drawn from the highest exercise of enlightened reason and conscience, and from the tremendous interests of a future world of reward and punishment. The dogmatic faith possesses every quality fitted to instruct the reason, satisfy the conscience, and move the affections. But the cause and the effect must stand or fall together. The loss of the truth involves the loss of the sentiment evoked by it. To destroy the dogmatic faith is to destroy Christianity, and to destroy Christianity is to destroy religion.

But it is possible that the general proposition that religion cannot survive without a creed may be admitted, and yet the assertion that the existence of a religious creed is bound up with the maintenance of Christian dogma denied. The intuitions

of the human mind are asserted to be competent to furnish all we need to know in regard to God, and thus to supply the mental food necessary for the life of the emotions. The soul, it is said, has powers of its own competent to reach into the other world and to unveil the Unseen. There is a voice ever speaking within the soul of Divine realities, a far safer guide than any sacred books of a distant past, or any technical formulas of faith, for it is an innate part of the soul, and as God made the soul, so the voice within it is the voice of God. To this we should listen as the absolute revealer of all truth, not only competent to keep alive the religious affections, but adequate to enable man to worship the spiritual God in spirit and in truth. If this be so, we no longer need the intervention of creeds and articles, since the soul reaches up directly to the Deity, and by its own powers finds out the Almighty to perfection. The claim is as ancient as the Alexandrian Platonists, and re-echoes the language of Plotinus and Porphyry [1].

In examining this plea, it is important to maintain the method already pursued in these lectures, and to bring it as far as possible to the test of facts. Are the intuitions competent to furnish mankind with religious truth, and supposing this answer to be in any degree in the affirmative, does the truth so supplied possess the definiteness and certainty necessary to make it influential over the conscience and the affections?

It is impossible not to be struck in the first place

by the personal and arbitrary character of the selected guide. For the intuitions, supposing them to be anything more than the primary grounds of all reasoning, are subjective and personal. In their highest form, therefore, and supposing them to possess the authority claimed for them, they can be a guide to the individual alone, and not to others beyond himself. Either all men possess alike these scintillations of Deity within the soul, or they are the peculiar gifts of a favoured few. If all men possess them, each man must be guided by his own; for to him they are asserted to be the voice of God, and consequently to possess an absolute authority. He cannot consent to submit his inward convictions to the convictions of any other man. Each must believe for himself, and on no principle can the belief of one have the slightest possible supremacy over the belief of another. If all men do not possess these asserted glimpses into the other world, the independence of individual belief still remains the same. Your intuitions, is the natural reply to any man who should claim to be a revealer of Divine things, tell you that there is a God, but mine tell me that there is no God. You believe in another world, and are therefore quite right to act in accordance with your belief; I do not believe it, and am therefore equally bound in conscience to follow my convictions as you are to follow yours. Such a reply is unanswerable on the principles of intuitionalism. For the man who claims to possess the knowledge of Divine things has no evidence whatever to give,

and does not profess to have any, beyond his own subjective convictions. If men were not misled by the mere sound of words and the ostentatious use of philosophical phrases, this fact would be sufficient of itself to expose the futility of the claim. Let us drop the word intuitions, and call these individual and self-formed conceptions of Divine things, notions or fancies, and the imposing appearance of the plea is lost at once. Such they really are. They are no creed, and never can furnish a creed. They are but the phantasies of the individual brain, and to the individual brain alone can they have authority.

But against this is cited the existence of a natural religion. To the prevalence of a religious sentiment among almost all known portions of the human family I referred in my last lecture. It is not to be denied that a creed of some sort exists side by side with the sentiment; and in exact proportion as this creed is definite it is dogmatic, although devoid of the authority out of which alone dogma can properly spring. But whence this creed has been derived is a very different question. Our common use of the descriptive phrase, "natural religion," in no degree forecloses the enquiry [2]. For we use the word to distinguish the common belief of the heathen world from the definite system of Christianity revealed in the sacred Scriptures and constituting the foundation of the Christian Church. How "natural religion" has been obtained, is a question wholly different from the recognition of its existence.

Two answers are given to this enquiry. On one

side it is declared to be the natural outgrowth of a Divinely-implanted sentiment, the product of the intuitive faculties of the soul. It is indisputable that Scripture meets this assertion with a direct negative, and teaches that it has been derived, not from within, but from without, the Divinely-given supply to the cravings of a created, and therefore dependent being.

The inability of man to discover aught about God for himself, pervades the inspired teaching throughout, and furnishes the very reason for the inspiration. The acknowledgment of Eliphaz finds its echo in the teaching of prophets and apostles. I quote his words because the very position of the speaker renders them peculiarly applicable to my argument. Eliphaz was an Arabian, not a Jew. The Book of Job itself was, in all probability, antecedent in date to the times of Moses and to the giving of the Law. Yet the knowledge possessed by Job and his friends, relative to the nature of God, to man's dependence moral duties and final destiny, is equally considerable and specific. Whence was this knowledge obtained? The question is the more interesting because this group of ancient saints does not stand alone in Scripture, but forms a portion of a distinct line of holy men, entirely separate from the seed of Abraham, and yet holding a definite faith identical, so far as it went, with the completed revelation of later times. We trace the links of this descent in Melchizedek, in Jethro the priest of Midian, in Balaam the prophet, as St. Peter calls him, and the old prophet of Bethel. Whence was their knowledge of God received? The

answer is recorded by inspiration, and therefore is written for our learning, although it is not itself inspired. It conveys moreover the earliest expression of Gentile experience that we possess. There is something of indignant wonder in the interrogative form of the assertion, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

But the Scriptural history itself goes further, and supplies a definite explanation of the origin of all religious knowledge. It is important that this account should be clearly understood.

God originally framed man for holy intercourse with Himself, to be the mortal reflection of His own moral likeness. He accordingly made Him neither autocratic nor self-sufficient, but a vessel, as it were, to be filled with the Divine Presence. His holiness and happiness were those of dependence, and God was the source and complement of them. The human soul was like an earthen cistern, and God the fountain which flowed into it. When man fell, the channel between the two was broken. The Divine justice cut off on one side the outflowing of the Divine benevolence, and on the other the guilty will of the fallen creature was alienated from the Divine fountain.

It pleased God to scheme a mode of reunion by the atoning work of God the Son and the sanctifying power of God the Holy Ghost; the one expiating the guilt, the other removing the infection incurred by the Fall. It pleased God for this purpose

to renew and deepen upon men's souls the consciousness of their sin and of their need of a redemption. The truths acquired by Adam and Eve in Paradise by immediate intercourse with "the Lord God" as He "walked in the garden in the cool of the day," were not effaced from the memory of our first parents by the Fall, although their power was weakened over the heart. They communicated them to their children. And that, amid the degenerate tendencies of human nature, they might not be wholly lost, God refreshed and deepened them from time to time by a special order of prophets, commissioned by immediate inspiration from Himself to preach them to the world. Thus they spread as mankind spread, and after the Flood, as before, became the common heirloom of the race. When the dispersion of mankind took place, and men in the course of the primary migrations spread themselves gradually over the world, they carried with them this original tradition of truth. It met the wants and cravings of a soul deprived by the Fall of that immediate intercourse with God for which it was made, and still retaining a vague sense of moral want and a dim apprehension of an unseen world. God has inscribed on the soul a witness for Himself as it were in invisible ink, and the influence of these truths prevents it from being altogether effaced. Who shall doubt that God's Spirit has ever continued to strive with men, and that the heart of heathendom has dimly felt His influence? Thus the feeling of another world, the instinctive belief in a God, the consciousness

of sin expressed in sacrifices, the need of a priesthood, and some apprehension of another world of reward and punishment, have survived to the present day,—survived, I believe it will be found, universally, whenever a more accurate acquaintance of facts shall enable us to look more closely into the only apparent exceptions.

If this account be true, the whole of the Divine plan of revelation lies before us, alike consistent and consecutive. When the event proved—not to the Divine prescience, for God knew the end from the beginning, but to man himself, and, may we not add, to the inhabitants of other worlds who watch the wondrous history—that fallen human nature was incapable of maintaining this tradition of truth, much less of working itself upward by its means into a higher knowledge of the Divine will, God laid up the truth in one special channel in the family of Abraham; surrounded it with special enactments; cradled the family into a great and conspicuous nation; acted alike through the influence of its contact and of its isolation on the heathenism outside; vindicated in the history of this chosen race His prerogatives alike of mercy and of power; prepared the line of descent from which the Saviour of mankind should take flesh; wrought out the mysterious drama of His life, sufferings, and death; gave by the mouth of the Apostles and Evangelists all the dogmatic truths necessary to enable men to understand the nature of His work; poured out the Spirit to enable them to believe and live; laid up

all these truths in the written Word; established by miraculous signs and wonders the Church, that she might maintain and witness to this deposit of the faith,—and then, having raised Christ from the dead and given Him glory, pauses, as it were, during the existing dispensation, till the number of His elect being gathered out of the world, the glorified Jesus shall return to reign, welcomed by ten thousand times ten thousand voices “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Thus the dogmatic faith, enshrined in Scripture, and thence gathered and formulated by the saints, is but the completion of a purpose framed in the mind of God from everlasting. It entered upon its first accomplishment in time in the creation of the first man. Then shone the earliest ray of light, and it has ever waxed brighter and brighter since then, ever risen higher and higher towards the zenith, till, like the sun in the material firmament, it fills the world with light and glory. Who can survey so vast a scheme and not adore the infinite love that prompted, the infinite wisdom that schemed, the infinite power that accomplished it? “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

Such is the teaching of Scripture. None can deny that it is intelligible and consistent with the facts. The causes asserted to have been in action are plainly competent to the effect. Side by side with its broad, clear, definite explanation, let us place the claims of the intuitions, lofty and confident

enough, it is true, but avowedly devoid of any historical evidence. It is very difficult to bring within the reach of argument a system professedly resting on assertion, not on argument. I can only place the claims of the intuitive faculty in contrast with the historical facts of the case, as I have already placed the claims of the Church in contrast with them, and draw the conclusion.

On doing this, one broad, palpable fact attracts attention. It is that all our religious knowledge whatever is included within the circle of the faith "once delivered unto the saints." Not one solitary religious truth is consequently known to have been discovered by this religious intuition. It is not simply that the doctrines held by the Church lie within the circle of inspiration; but that none are found outside the circle, recognised as truths by those who do not belong to the Church. Let the Church, with her faith in a revelation, be placed on one side, and rationalism, with its assertion of man's self-sufficient capacity, upon the other. It is quite conceivable that the rationalist might accept certain religious truths, or religious sentiments, which the Church, on the ground that they have not the sanction of revelation, disavows. In this case rationalism would have a religious creed of its own beyond and in addition to the creed of the Church. But when the facts are examined this is found not to be the case. Rationalism has neither any distinct religious truth, nor any distinct religious sentiment. All that rationalism holds the faith includes. Up

to a certain point the two advance together, and then the distinctive province of rationalism is marked out solely by denial, not affirmation; destruction, not construction.

It must be remembered also that the teaching of the Church is a logical whole, so coherent and complete that the rationalistic denial dislocates and disjoins the truth falling within the rationalistic acceptance. The common truths accepted by both are as incoherent without the special truths rejected by rationalism, as the backbone of an extinct plesiosaurus would be incoherent without the head and legs of the animal. In every case, without exception, the creed of rationalism is included within the creed of Christianity. Take away from the former all that is possessed by it in common with the faith, and you take away everything. Literally nothing remains beyond the asserted power of intuitive discovery. And the power of discovery, which has never discovered anything, is left in its own vanity and emptiness, *vox et præterea nihil*.

I Let us take the creed of the Pantheist. He believes that a Divine life and energy pervade the entire universe of being. In every atom of matter and in every new form of it, in every organized existence and in every pulse of life pervading it, there is to be found God. The whole universe throbs and beats with life. In saying this he only says what the Christian believes as heartily as the Pantheist. He can employ no language of universality, extension, eternity, constancy of action,

immutability of being, and pervasiveness of strength which the Christian will not echo. He can raise no hymn of praise to this ubiquitous Omnipresence, this vast, immense, Unknown of life, to which the Christian may not say, in yet louder and more rapturous tones, "Amen."

Beyond this indeed the two separate, and directly they separate the Pantheist ceases to affirm and begins only to deny. The Christian goes on to refer this universal life to an Infinite, All-pervading Personality, conscious, intelligent, self-existent, eternal, perfect in moral perfection and attributes, and in His very nature unlimited and unconditioned. He thus makes a chaos into a cosmos, for he recognises mind everywhere. He not only sees mind in the countless units of the intelligent whole, related to other minds as the separate drops of a multitudinous sea are related to each other, but one single mind, pervading, and organising, and reproducing its own likeness in all else, like a sun reflected in every atom but itself distinct from its reflections. This the Pantheist denies, and his denial throws him back on a vague and dreadful abstraction, without consciousness, intelligence, will, or affection; a tremendous something fearful in its vague negation of personality—a thick and impenetrable darkness.

II Take the case of the Theist. He advances with the Christian a step further, and believes with him in a Divine Personality, "in all, through all, over all." He agrees further that this God is a

Being of benevolence and love, recognising amid the sterner features of the world the predominant characteristics of far-seeing wisdom and infinite goodness. But here he stops, professing to know no more of Him now in the nineteenth century of the Christian era and amid all the prodigious advances of human civilisation and knowledge, than the great Roman orator knew and expounded with singular eloquence nearly two thousand years ago.

The Christian advances further, and asserts that this benevolent Deity, touched by the misery of His human creatures, has made Himself known to them by a revelation communicated through the instrumentality of men like themselves, and fixing itself so inextricably into the very framework of all human evidence and human belief, that it is impossible to tear it out without destroying the whole. By means of this revelation the full character of the personal God has become known to us as a God of justice as well as a God of love, clothed with the awful prerogatives of truth, as with the gentler attributes of goodness. This manifestation of His attributes is accomplished in the provision of a remedy for the present misery of man and his final restoration to his primeval dignity and happiness, upon principles identified by immediate analogies with the ordinary moral government of the world. This plan of redemption is the great key-note of the Gospel. To this one pervading theme all the other truths of revelation are subordinate and preparatory. The grandeur of the plan is equally seen in the urgency

of the human danger, the dignity of the Divine agents, and the magnificence of the results. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

All this the Theist denies. His denial involves him in the most perplexing contradictions. For, according to him, the loving and merciful God of his belief has looked down on our human misery and all the anxious questionings and conflicts of the human mind in its search after truth, without one solitary touch of pity. No word of sympathy has broken from His lips, no compassion touched His heart, no remedial purpose of love stretched His hand towards us. This God of love is thus found to be either stern and inexorable as the deity of Stoic fatalism, in that He feels no pity; or else weak and dreamy as the deity of Epicurus, in that He is unable or unwilling to express it.

It is confessed that if Christianity be not a revelation from God, there is no such revelation in a positive or written form. The only communication from God to man, asserted to exist, consists of His ordinary motions on the natural intellect and affections. But these are wholly powerless for real good, according to the Theist himself. The dim intuitions of the intellect have neither brought to light one solitary truth to guide human perplexity, nor have they sufficed to preserve the vast majority of mankind from the influence of that dogmatic faith which he believes to be no more than a mischievous superstition. The painful gropings of the heart after God, "feeling after Him, if haply they might find

Him," are no more than pathetic acknowledgments of the soul's unsatisfied wants. Yet, according to the Theist, this God of love has seen and known all this, and yet has never spoken a word of comfort, either too darkly reckless of human suffering to do anything to alleviate it, or too helplessly fettered by His own laws to be able to break through the veil of the unseen and convey an intelligible communication to His suffering creatures. A more humiliating picture of the Deity in the one case, or a more dreadful one in the other, cannot be conceived.

III Take the theory of the Transcendentalist. He has lofty views of the natural dignity of man, of the subtlety of his genius, the strength of his will, the instincts of his moral nature, and his ambition after the great and true. In this estimate the Christian fully concurs, for no one has so lofty a conception of man as he. Christianity exalts man almost to the loftiest standard of the created. The disciple of the faith not only agrees that man is great and noble, but goes on to explain the source of his dignity and to carry it to a yet higher reach. He maintains that, in addition to the subtlety of his intellect, and the strength of his will, and the instincts of his moral nature, man has another claim for honour in the immortal soul tabernacling within him. He neither depreciates the intellect nor the heart of man below his opponent. He only advances further and glorifies them both by his belief in a spiritual nature, yet larger in its capacities, loftier in its hopes, and endless in its life.

He explains whence man derives His greatness by the fact that he was made in the image of God Himself after the very likeness of the Deity, and that, great as man is now, he is no more than the wreck of the yet greater self he was before the Fall, and his state on earth no more than the childhood of the glorified maturity still remaining for him in heaven.

Here again modern thought and Christian belief go hand in hand up to a certain point. Christian belief then carries the dignity of man higher yet. Modern thought begins to deny and reject. The moment it thus severs itself from revealed theology, that moment its inextricable difficulties begin. It labours at every step, like the Egyptians when the Lord troubled their host and broke off their chariot wheels that they drave them heavily. It cannot be denied that man with intellect and conscience and affection, and a moral nature and an immortal soul, is greater than man with intellect and conscience, and affection and a moral nature without a soul. The Christian therefore outstrips the Transcendentalist in his own course, and holds a yet loftier estimate of man.

Equally certain is it that, taking man as he is, the doctrine of the Fall invests him with an additional nobility. For if man be not a fallen creature, then his present condition must be the highest measure of his capability and of his hopes. If he never was greater than he is now found to be in the past, there is no probability that he will ever

become greater in the future. Modern thought therefore fixes him where he is, and stereotypes him for ever as he is. Christian thought, starting from the same point, believes that he was greater in the past, and will again become incomparably greater in the future.

This belief reconciles, moreover, the loftier side of man, as the defaced lineaments of his original glory, with the existence of a lower side with meaner impulses and at discord with his nobler self, as following from the disorder and ruin of the Fall. To the man who rejects the Christian doctrine, human nature is an inextricable puzzle, nor can he throw a ray of light on its contradictions. Thus it is very common to hear Transcendentalists speak in one breath of the perfectibility of human nature and its self-sufficiency in all things, and in the next breath lament man's ignorance of his own good and his liability to what he considers the superstitious follies of religion [3]. Yet if man be perfect, whence come this ignorance and weakness, this tendency to accept the false instead of rising to the true?

Moreover, the facts of human life sternly prove that there is something out of joint, both in man and in his condition. The records of individual life are too black with the shadows both of moral and physical evil to be reconciled with such a sunshiny philosophy. Hence the Transcendentalist is driven to sink the individual in the mass. Forced to confess that his theory does not hold good of single men, he applies it only to the aggregate of mankind.

In this respect modern thought shakes hands with ancient philosophy, and re-echoes its complaint that Christianity makes too much of the individual. Yet how a whole made up of intelligent and conscious individuals, each with a life of his own, is to realise the dream of moral perfectibility, while the individuals composing it are singly corrupt and degraded, is a problem baffling all solution. Christianity begins with the individual and thus logically rises to the mass. Modern thought, driven out of its theories by the patent facts of individual life, can only hide its perplexity under the abstract notion of an aggregate without individuals, a whole without parts, a perfection made up of imperfection. So far as it agrees with revelation, all is consistent ; directly it takes a path of its own, all becomes confusion.

IV Take the Optimist, who makes a step in advance, although it be but a small one. He holds that all things are for the best, and that amid the sufferings and struggles of mankind human nature is yet working its way upward and onward, and advancing towards a more perfect condition. No true believer in revelation can doubt either the one or the other without being faithless to his principles. He not only accepts, but in this case, as in the preceding, enlarges and explains. All things are for the best, by virtue of no inherent power in evil to develop good, for evil must ever gravitate towards an increase of itself ; but by virtue of an overruling Wisdom bringing good out of evil,

and converting the evil itself into the instrument of good. This is true of natural laws. The storm destructive of life and property fills the atmosphere with the seeds of larger and freer life. Pestilence is the providential stimulus of sanitary progress. Difficulties and conflicts are the school of all the heroic virtues. Fortitude, self-control, heroic force of will, unselfish generosity, a rational love of liberty, and liberality tolerant of other men's opinions, all grow out of this soil. They are no hot-house exotics needing to be stimulated into artificial life, but vigorous evergreens, flourishing only in the free air of heaven, and striking their roots deep only in their native soil. The exercise of a Divine wisdom and power over-ordering evil for good is but the application of the same principle to the higher sphere of God's moral government, but another and a louder strain of the same harmonious music. The past history of the world is one long illustration of this truth. The experience of the past becomes prophetic, and catching its language from the glowing pages of the inspired Scriptures, sings its song of triumphant hope for the future. Looking back to the past and forward to the future, faith recognises that all is best. From the height of the revealed promise peeping on tiptoe into the future, it catches a glimpse of a more glorious hereafter. The Christian has reason for this confidence, for he rests upon positive promises and recognises a Divinely-given system of truth as the instrument, and the Holy Spirit of God as the agent of its accomplish-

ment. These the Optimist rejects, and the rejection cuts the wings of hope, and reduces his confidence into a belief without a reason, an effect without a cause, a faith without an evidence, a superstructure without a foundation.

V Take the case of the Rationalist. He holds the authority of the reason, and that nothing is to be believed without the assent of reason. Christianity entirely agrees with this, or it would be involved in the absurdity of supposing that the Creator gave man reason but did not intend him to use it. The duty of a personal enquiry into truth is prominent in Scripture. Private judgment, let us argue how we will about it, is inseparable from individual identity, and is as much exercised by the man who bows before the foot of Church absolutism and accepts a human priest *vice Dei*, as it is by the wildest disciple of lawless sectarianism. The nature of the act done is the same, the direction only differs. In the balances of the revealed Word, a formal or hereditary faith, accepting without earnestness and believing without enquiry, is not faith at all. Personal conviction following on personal enquiry, conducted on some process or another, is the essence and very life-blood of true piety. Thus far, therefore, Rationalism and Christianity agree.

Then indeed they separate, for Christianity goes on to assert two further truths, and Rationalism rejects them. First, she asserts that human reason needs to be assisted by an enlightenment from

above, and she rests the assertion on the doctrine of the Fall and the corruption of human nature maintained by her against the Transcendentalist. If the doctrine be true and supported by the indubitable evidence of experience, it must be admitted that the need of a Divine teaching to direct and rectify the operations of the reason follows necessarily from it. Without some such explanation it is impossible to understand how it happens that one portion of mankind are ever breaking out into wondering admiration of truths which another portion declare to be incredible and absurd.

But Christian thought maintains not only that reason needs to be assisted in its search after truth, but also that its range of capability is strictly limited. In proof of this she appeals to reason itself. She pleads in unison with the saints of God from the earliest times of the Church, that the subjects belonging to religion lie in their very nature beyond the reach of possible human discovery [4]. In regard to the nature of God and His purposes towards mankind, the human reason has no data for argument. The thoughts of God can in the nature of things be known to God alone. The wildest fanaticism has never claimed the power of discovering by intuition the thoughts of man, and its incapacity to discover the thoughts of God must be as much greater as, on the theory of Theism, Deity transcends humanity. God can only be known by revelation. In the absence of it we may guess at

what we can never positively assert. In the presence of revelation we must worship and believe.

Hence we plead that the first question submitted to the reason is a question of evidence, whether we have received a revelation or have not. I most fully admit that internal evidence must be as consistently included as external; but this evidence must be tested by its congruity with the theory of revelation itself, and not with antecedent notions of our own relative to the principles and conduct suitable or unsuitable to God. Rationalism rejects these limitations, and asserts the autocratic self-sufficiency of the reason. In so doing she stultifies herself. For in regard to many subjects of enquiry, reason is palpably insufficient. If it were not so we should not be in the nineteenth century absolutely devoid of any scientific theory of life [5]. In fact, we should not have progressive science at all, for progressive science is imperfect science, and imperfect science is partial ignorance. If we are compelled to confess that we are ignorant of many of the Creator's works, is it likely that we should be competent to understand and measure the Creator?

VI Advancing into the region of dogma, let us take the case of the Unitarian. He takes his stand upon the humanity of Christ, and alleges the clear declarations of Scripture in support of his view. The Trinitarian does not call one of these texts into doubt, nor depreciate the certainty or precision of the truth they teach. The

Church yields to no man upon earth in her devout recognition of the true humanity of Christ and her resolute maintenance of it. She echoes back with her deep Amen every sentiment of admiration and praise. Before the picture of the Perfect Man, complete in every human lineament of sympathy and affection, and made more tender by the shadow of earthly weaknesses and wants, she sits in rapt meditation, counting every tear He shed, catching every smile of affection, sympathising with every grief, and seeking to realise with fond affection the very face and form of the "Man of Sorrows." She blends up the recollection of His august figure with her own earthly conflict, still sees Him walking upon the storm and smiling in the sunshine, and by the association of her own daily conflicts and experiences with those of her suffering Lord, sanctifies the very earth we tread and the very air we breathe.

So far the Unitarian and the Trinitarian are one. But here they separate. To our eyes the despised of Nazareth wears upon His shoulders a more august robe, and carries upon His brow a yet loftier crown. Side by side with every text expressive of humanity the Church places another text expressive of His Deity. Through the veil of the flesh she watches the outflashing lustre of the Godhead breaking forth in sign and miracle, in more than human holiness, in an all-searching omniscience and a power to suffer and to merit, transcending the loftiest reach of the creature.

She clings to Him as true man born of a human mother. She worships Him as true God, "Light of Light, very God of very God." She trusts to Him as God and man in one person, the perfect mysterious and indivisible Christ.

The Unitarian denies all this. His denial makes the life of Christ inexplicable. All attempts to explain it on the principles of a humanitarian philosophy are as unreasonable as it would be to explain the life of man with reference to his body alone, and leave out of view the indwelling Spirit that fills it with motion, intelligence, and will.

VII Take the case of the Universalist. There is a common truth even here, and that one of the distinctive truths of revelation. God loves all; "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." The reach of the gift is equal to the breadth of the love. The work of Jesus Christ "the righteous" was to make propitiation "for the sins of the whole world." The heart of ancient heathenism never grasped this idea of the equality of all men before God, or of the community of the hope of salvation. Yet potentially the merits of Christ are wide as the world; and if they are not equally wide efficaciously, the limitation does not arise from any narrowness of object with God, but from the perverse absence of a suitable condition in ourselves. As regards the width of the Divine purpose we are agreed.

But the orthodox Christian adds the truths of a future judgment and of differences of reward or punishment. The entrance into life eternal

lies across the narrow way, and Christ is Himself both the road and the gateway. In His grand parables He has told us over and over again that there will be some in the great day on the left hand as well as some on the right. There must be a moral fitness between the heavenly mansions and their inhabitants. It is no fault of God that it is absent. For the promise of access to God through the blood of Christ and the sanctifying work of God the Holy Ghost is free to all. "Come unto Me all ye that travail." The everlasting separation of condition hereafter will only correspond to the separation of moral character here, and the judgment-day will be the public proclamation of it. The Universalist denies this, and is perplexed accordingly to explain whence the moral fitness for heaven is to be derived, and how the mere act of dying is supposed to change sin into holiness, the wicked into the good, and the criminal into the saint.

VIII Lastly, take the case of another school of thought which advances beyond all these. Its disciples admit, in terms at all events, the dogmas of human sin and of vicarious atonement. But as they lower the standard of the latter, so they void the former of its distinctive meaning. To them atonement means reconciliation, and the atoning work itself the message of reconciliation. The Cross of Christ is used as a synonym for the sublimest self-sacrifice, the loftiest and purest act of heroical constancy and amazing love ever accomplished upon this world of selfishness and strife[6]. He who

believes with our Church that the death of Christ was "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," agrees with all this to the very utmost. We do not detract one iota from that grand and marvellous example of love given upon the Cross, because we recognise in it a yet loftier character, a yet deeper mystery. We do but advance further, draw as it were nearer to the innermost agony of the Son of God. Holding the sublime example, the self-sacrificing love, the heroic strength of endurance, we invest them with a more amazing wonder when we add to them the belief of a vicarious and substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Thus we add another element to the anguish of the dying Redeemer in the actual endurance of sin's penalty, the actual dying of its death. We thus give to our Lord's work a distinctive character, to Himself a distinctive glory, solely and indivisibly His own. None but He has ever trodden that wine-press of the wrath of God. He alone "who knew no sin" was yet "made sin for us," and suffered its extremest agony, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Was our Lord's death but a sequel to His ministry and the pledge of His commission, then many others have died for us as He died for us ; many an Apostle and holy saint laying down his life for the service and sacrifice of our faith. But if the dying God bore upon His mighty shoulders the weight of a world's sins, then in this He stands alone, one, single,

and unapproachable. We hold all that our opponents hold, or rather, they hold our truth up to a certain point of it, and when they stop they void the mystery of the Cross of its meaning and its blessedness. They leave the sinner outside the gate, as it were, mourning under a burden of sin the more intolerable from its contrast with the unapproachable holiness of Christ; while we lead him on into the Holy of Holies through the rent veil of the body and blood of Jesus, along the new and living way that He hath consecrated for us, because "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Thus, in every case without exception, the creed of the Rationalist is also the creed of the Christian. The Christian, in relation to the Rationalist, occupies a position of progress, affirming truths coherent with the common belief of both; but in every case the Rationalist, in relation to the Christian, occupies a position of retrogression, rejecting truths complementary of his own belief. It is indeed possible to represent the state of the case in another way and to describe the Rationalist as affirming what the Christian denies. For instance, the Transcendentalist affirms the perfection of human nature, the Rationalist the sufficiency of reason, the Universalist the final salvation of all men, the Unitarian the sole humanity of Christ, and in each case the Christian faith rejects the assertion. But this position is only gained by a trick of words. In every instance the affirmation of the Rationalist consists of a denial of some Christian doctrine, stated on

the reverse side and turned into an affirmation. It remains therefore that in every case where Rationalism and Christianity differ, the latter affirms and the former denies. The Rationalist has consequently no special truths of his own, not one solitary point either of belief or sentiment belonging exclusively to himself. What is the conclusion but that what he has is not his own discovering, but is really a borrowed ray from the sun of revelation, a reflection, it may be unconsciously received, of the heavenly light.

Hence it appears that human knowledge, independently of revelation, possesses no religious truth even to the smallest degree. The utmost that can possibly be claimed is, that it has arrived at what it believes by an independent process of its own, and has not simply borrowed it from revelation. Indisputably ancient heathenism was in possession of some of these beliefs, but was not in possession of the Christian books in their complete form. But it must be remembered that the world was in possession of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that all the dogmas of the faith are contained more or less distinctly in them. In an imperfect form they were largely possessed by heathen thinkers, and were read with interest and earnestness. The mere fact of the Septuagint version being found in the Library of Alexandria proves this beyond dispute. It was ever alleged by the early Fathers that the heathen philosophers, from Zoroaster downwards, have been deeply indebted to inspired sources

for their glimpses of truth. Modern thought has laboured in every way to throw doubt upon this assertion, but I believe that a careful examination leads in this, as in many other instances, to confirm the statements of the past in opposition to the sceptical doubts of the present [7].

At all events, it admits of no controversy that the Jewish theology exercised an immense indirect influence on human thought in general. The opulent and flourishing communities maintained by the Jews at the centres of the world's civilisation, in the times subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, and the prodigious number of influential proselytes to Jewish belief known to have existed in imperial Rome herself, are conclusive proofs of it [8]. The direct and indirect influences of Jewish theology on the world are insufficient indeed to explain all the facts without the supposition of an original tradition of truth given to all men before the dispersion of mankind, such as Scripture positively asserts to have existed. But the facts are sufficient to show that, even in the palmiest times of the world's intellect and learning, the glimpses of truth acquired by ancient philosophy were not the achievements of unassisted human reason, but of human reason constantly stimulated by a revelation from without. Great truths, if once caught, are seldom wholly lost. Whether the human mind be capable of maintaining them alive and uncorrupted is another question. I believe it to be incapable of doing so. The condition of the antediluvian world, and the growing idolatries of

mankind after the Deluge, alike justify the conclusion. But should the question be answered in the affirmative, the power to maintain is a very different thing from the power to discover.

From the time of Christianity down to the present moment, not one solitary shred of religious truth has been added to the dogmatic faith. Yet during this period human reason has laboured at the problem with every conceivable advantage. It took the question up at the point already reached by the wonderful philosophy of the pre-Christian era. All the stores of ancient thought and learning were there to assist it. It has pursued the enquiry amid a blaze of light reflected from the whole body of dogmatic truth contained in the Christian Scriptures. Should the Divine authority of these books be rejected, yet so large a mass of dogma must contain some germs of truth, some sparks of heavenly light, some suggestions to assist the mind in its own enquiries. Moreover, these twenty centuries have culminated in an increase of human knowledge beyond all other periods of the world. The discoveries in physical science, the triumphs of an audacious genius and a fearless adventure, the achievements of skill and industry, have been so wonderful as almost to excuse the intoxication of success, and remove all surprise that science should occasionally forget herself. We may well be proud and thankful to live in such an age. Yet amid it all, at a time when almost every day brings a discovery in the sphere of the Seen, not

one solitary shred of a discovery has been made in the sphere of the Unseen. The fact cannot be too earnestly reiterated that not one single truth, esteemed to be a truth in the estimate of Rationalism itself, has been added to human belief or to the dogmatic Christianity of two thousand years ago. We may go further. Not only has human intuition failed to add a point of doctrine to the old creed, but it has not discovered an additional argument in support of what we believe. Modern labour has accumulated additional stores of information; it has enlarged indefinitely the particular details of old facts; it has gathered out of the distant past corroborative proofs of the marvellous accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, equally surprising in number, varied in kind, and specific in character; it has enabled us to bring to the study of the sacred text a much closer and more exact criticism, but to our knowledge of the things unseen it has added, literally and as a simple matter of fact, nothing.

What conclusion must we draw from this failure but that the mind of man is constitutionally incapable of discovering religious truth? If it has proved itself to be thus incompetent during the singular advantages of the last two thousand years, is it credible that during the two thousand years preceding it can have discovered truth without them? Or, leaving the comparative sunshine of philosophic times, and passing into the thick darkness of heathen barbarism, is it credible that the savage can have done what all the light and intellect of civilisation

have signally failed to accomplish ? The other world lies beyond the reach even of the soul's vision. No human faculty has ever crossed the "great gulf fixed" between the Seen and the Unseen, or pierced by one solitary glance the impenetrable barriers of the unknown.

Here, therefore, we gain another step. Any knowledge acquired by the intuitions is solely personal and arbitrary at best, and never can carry even a shadow of authority beyond the sphere of the individual. But now it appears that even within this sphere it is incapable of teaching religious truth. Men mistake for flashes of an indwelling Deity the reflected rays of an external revelation. In our Christian civilisation, saturated with the dogmatic teaching of centuries, grand truths impregnate the very air we breathe. Men imbibe them consciously or unconsciously into their mental and moral selves. As the mind dwells upon them in meditation, they flash up every now and then into vivid reality in that secret sympathy of soul which, by the very intensity of its own outgoing, makes old truths new. No man can be wholly devoid of this experience. In some moment of peculiar receptivity the latent truth pours its bright beams through the crevices of our ignorance or indifference. The philosopher calls them intuitions, and claims to have pierced into the Unseen. A devout mind recognises in them the influences of the Holy Spirit of God, leaving Himself not entirely without witness in any man, but mercifully breaking every now and then the

stagnation of a fallen nature with a breath from the other world, and an ever-pleading voice that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

Truths acquired by the intuitions there are none. If they exist, let them be proclaimed. We invoke this supposed faculty of the soul, but, as it was with the dumb Baal of ancient times, there is neither voice nor any that answereth. There is no other source of a religious creed than revelation. If religion cannot survive without a creed, and the dogmatic faith be rejected, then religion must die. It is not indeed easy even for unbelief wholly to shut out the sunshine. It still steals in through some unclosed crevice of the conscience. For the other world alone is reserved an absolute and eternal midnight.

It is useless to prove at any length the inadequacy of the human intellect to give certainty to belief, if the facts have already compelled the conclusion that it can furnish nothing to be believed. This conclusion, however, rests only on a very high probability; it cannot claim absolute certainty where the authority of the Scriptural statement is denied. If, however, we relax the stringency of the proposition, and from asserting the total incapacity of the intuitions assert only the utter absence of any element of moral certitude from them, the probability is indefinitely increased, and becomes a moral certainty. What admits of being denied altogether with great probability must be weak and uncertain to demonstration. I have already said that the claim asserted for an intuitive knowledge of religious truth does not

profess to rest on any evidence beyond that of the mental consciousness; and since this consciousness is individual, the evidence is the individual assertion and no more. So palpable is this total defect of proof, that the most enthusiastic advocates of the intuitional faculty are compelled to admit it [9]. An attempt is made to strengthen the position by the idea of a general or common intuition, so that the errors of any particular person might be corrected by the collective consciousness of other men. But the broad fact that the intuitions of different men do not lead them to the same conclusions, and that consequently no common verdict exists, is fatal to the attempt. The amount of authority due to the intuition is just the amount of authority due to the individual, and no more. The probability that the intuition is true or false is exactly the probability whether this particular man is right or wrong. Let it be noticed as worthy of attention that the claim is one of authority alone, and not of argument. The fallibility of the most perfect human judgment in the commonest affairs of daily life illustrates the instability of the foundation. Faith in such beliefs is a house built upon the sand. When the tempest comes, and the struggles of conscience and the alarms of death and the terrors of judgment test the stability of the belief, the foundation of sand must yield, and great will be the fall thereof.

But with whatever composure we may calculate chances and probabilities in ordinary matters, it is

a dreadful thing to rest the soul and the prospects of an eternity upon them. Here the soul craves for certitude. It is of the very essence of our created dependence to find a ground of certain trust somewhere. We cannot bear to live in an everlasting doubt. Spite of our theoretical convictions we must hold something as firm and fixed, even though, like a man in a dream, we do but clutch ourselves. The absolute sceptic who disbelieves everything, and reduces even all sensible objects into phenomena, is seldom candid enough to disbelieve his own disbelief. He becomes a faith to himself, and scepticism is his dogma. The notorious fact of the gross credulities of many disbelievers in revelation, is an evidence in the same direction. Man must have an object of trust somewhere, and the necessity is but the witness of his created dependence. There can be no self-sufficiency but in God.

Our daily experience of life educates this craving of the soul for some point of rest. Look where we will, change and fluctuation are everywhere. Life is like a restless sea, in motion through every solitary drop of its multitudinous waters. In ourselves, in body, soul, and spirit; in those social circles which make up our larger selves, and in which we multiply our own joys and sorrows; in the circumstances of life and its chequered scenes of good and evil; in the physical world around us, the earth beneath our feet, the air we breathe, the firmament above with its crowd of glorious orbs all in motion; in

the whole course of this stupendous cosmos,—movement and change are everywhere. Could we find no fixed point on which to rest, the heart would grow sick and giddy with the universal unquietness. The infidel literally has no such fixed point, unless he finds it in the blind fatalism of the great whole. The Theist finds it in God. He is the centre round whom all else revolves. He is the universal sun, and all creation moves upon that axis. He, self-existent and absolute, in the everlasting “now” of His being capable of no change; in the perfection of His wisdom and knowledge suffering from no incompleteness; in the glory of His moral attributes susceptible of no caprice, and in the almightiness of His power subject to no limitation,—He abides for ever amid a world of change, absolute and immutable.

But it is not sufficient for our moral necessities simply to know that thus it must be; the intellectual conception of fixity is not enough. Neither variableness nor shadow of turning affect Him. It is we who are tossed by the ceaseless ebb and flow, and we who need to find repose. We need to link our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His omniscience, our wants to His fulness, our misery to His magnificence. Such was David’s experience, and such David’s triumph. “The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.”

Brethren, there is but one means of union with God. No intellectual abstraction, no rhapsody of

the imagination can supply it. The inspired Word of God making known Himself and His will is the instrumental means, unveiling as it were to our adoring eyes the very face of the Deity. Meritoriously it can only be wrought by the union of the soul through faith with the incarnate Son of God, when His own words are accomplished in regard to His people, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Efficiently it is the special work of God the Holy Ghost, enlightening the intellect, quickening the conscience, sanctifying the heart. Here, and here alone, can we find rest in life, and hope in death, and beyond the resurrection, heaven. Bereft of this union the soul disconsolately turns from its own necessities and struggles, and casting its eyes on the deep mysteries of the other world, impenetrable in their thick darkness to the feeble glance of human eyes, cries out in the language of despair: "Who can by searching find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

LECTURE V

DOGMA AND SPECULATION

I TIM. VI. 20, 21

Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

DOGMA is the expression of authority. The foundation of all dogmatic truth is laid in the sacred Scriptures. The language of our Church relative to these authoritative records of the faith is very explicit, and has been previously quoted. She declares them to be "God's most true Word," "God's Word written." To offer any proof of this assertion has not fallen within the object of these Lectures. I adopt the teaching of the Church as my starting point in vindicating the necessity of dogma. The Word of God contains the faith, and the faith so contained is dogmatic alike by virtue of the infallibility of revealed truth, and alike by virtue of the authority of the Revealer. Propositions may be stated in a dogmatic form without

any claim to a Divine authority. But they cannot have a Divine authority without assuming a dogmatic form. It has pleased God to deliver the faith once for all to the saints, and the formulating of this faith into definite articles has necessarily been accomplished by their hands. To these Church formulas authority is due so far, and so far only, as they truly embody the mind of God revealed in His Word.

A common mental tendency of our day draws a line of distinction, broad and deep, between the inspired Word and the Church formulas. The first it acknowledges to be Divine, qualifying the admission, more or less, according to the religious standpoint of the thinker ; but the second it positively asserts to be human. It fixes attention rather on the form of the creeds than on their substance ; and in the occasional circumstances of their composition loses sight of the foundation of their authority. To confuse the two questions together, is to sow thick the pregnant seeds of fallacy. That the technical framework of the creeds of the Church is human is denied by no one. We know at what date and under what circumstances they were composed ; who were their principal authors ; out of what emergencies of controversy they grew ; and against what special forms of heresy they were directed. They bear in their structure the clear traces of their birth-time. No one can assert more strongly the human origin of the technical forms, and the

consequent possibility of error in formulating them, than the framers of the creeds themselves. But though the vessel be earthen, the excellency of the gift may nevertheless be of God.

Men who fix their attention upon the human side of them alone, naturally ascribe to them only a human character. They regard them as one among many forms of speculation, standing on precisely the same footing as the thousand varied systems schemed by the brain of the philosopher. They therefore submit them to the same tests, and judge of the dogmas of the Church as they judge of the dreams of the Neo-Platonists, the systems of the idealists, the credulities of the spiritualists, or the negations of the Positivists. If they were correct in their premisses, they would be indisputably correct in their conclusions, and would be amply justified in claiming the right to remodel Church dogmas into accordance with the latest ideas of the nineteenth century.

The question demands a separate investigation. Are the premisses true? Is the faith of the Church a speculative philosophy based on the same principles, working by the same instruments, and therefore claiming no more than the same authority as other philosophic schemes? Must it descend from the pulpit into the schools, and exchange the sacred garments of the priesthood for the robe of the philosopher? Or may we continue to sit at the feet of a Divine revelation and listen to its grand teachings, assured

that beneath the earthly accents sounds the very voice of God ?

This enquiry will only carry the argument of the preceding lectures a step further, and follow it into another sphere of thought. Human belief has ever developed itself upon two lines, the one the superstition of the many, the other the philosophy of the few. In Christianity the separation has no place. The authoritative faith of revelation presents the same grand features to the free and open knowledge of all the world. Whatever differences exist in the practical religion of men do not arise from any diversities in the faith, but from the differences of capability, moral and intellectual, in those who receive it. Its great principles are brought into immediate contact with the realities of actual life, and find in the working world their truest and highest illustrations. Within the compass of the same faith is milk for babes and strong meat for men — plain truths, simple enough for the loving comprehension of a child, and mysteries high and deep enough to overtask the powers of an archangel. But the two cannot be sharply separated from each other. The man in his strong grasp of the broad truths of saving love, exercises the humility of the child ; and the child in the majesty of the revelation, rises into the maturity of the man.

This very comprehensiveness bears the stamp and signature of Divinity. In all other religions the narrow exclusiveness of human jealousy has

maintained the separation between the creed of the few and the superstition of the many as a formal and avowed principle. The philosophic creed of the few has been as inadequate to satisfy the moral cravings of the many as the credulities of the many have been impotent to meet the intellectual wants of the few. The two spheres have existed apart from each other. The popular belief, in the absence of a rational foundation, has sunk into a superstition, and the philosophy of the many, in the absence of the moral element, has become a speculation.

I have already followed the claims of the religious sentiment in the one direction, and must now follow the philosophy in another. The change of association and aspect into which we pass is singular and striking. Hitherto the moral sentiment has been the predominant idea. An actual want on the part of the human soul of some contact with the unseen world, some grasp upon the arm of Deity and some glimpse of His face, some comfort to cheer man in life and some hope to brighten the shadows of his death, have met us everywhere. Now we put all these on one side and pass into the sphere of the intellect alone. The change of association is as great as if we passed from the tangled wilds of an American forest into the silence and sterility of a polar solitude. In the one there was life on every side, although wild and uncultivated, and in its very extravagance pregnant with deadly malaria. In the other there is not a trace of life. Every crystal form is clear and sharp ; a thousand

hues and colours play upon the surface of earth and sky: but they are cold and superficial compared to the colours of the burning South, and there is not a sound of human life to disturb the terrible monotony of the everlasting silence. It is, however, conceivable that in this cold region of intellectual speculation eternal truth may be found. The disturbing influences of moral feeling and passion are eliminated, and in their absence the accurate and exactly poised intellect may perhaps have discovered the great mysteries of life and death. Let us therefore see whether the speculation of the head has proved itself more powerful to find out God than the instinctive sentiment of the heart.

In comparing the faith with speculative philosophy we are assisted by the fact that both are systems. The doctrines of Christianity constitute a system by virtue of the organic unity pervading them. It is not only that they have been systematised by theologians; but it is that an internal sequence and coherence pervades the doctrines themselves. They constitute a complete history of humanity and of the world. The act of creation and the relation existing between the Creator and the created form the first links of the chain. The primeval harmony of the two in the paradisaical state; the interruption of it by the sin and fall of man; the purpose of God to restore the broken harmony by the salvation of His fallen creatures; the work of the Incarnate

Son, schemed, undertaken, and completed with this object; the operations of the Holy Ghost; the salvation of the individual soul, and the final glorification of the people of God at the restitution of all things,—are doctrines which beyond all possible dispute are closely connected with each other. So close is their connection that the omission of any one dislocates the order of the rest, as manifestly as broken links in a chain destroy the continuity of the whole. Any misconception in one doctrine vitiates the conception of the whole, as certainly as a broken circuit interrupts the course of the electric current. For instance, a denial of the full creative work of God, or a low estimate of the extent of the depravity of man, extends its effect throughout the entire circle of doctrine. The faith is not an accidental aggregate of isolated units, but a coherence of connected members in an organised body.

This structural unity of the faith arises naturally from the personal unity of its Author. One mind has schemed it all, and therefore one thought pervades it all. The authorship and the authority are equivalent. The faith is equally systematic in the structure of the inspired documents[1], in the relation of its doctrines to each other, and in the grounds of its obligations upon reason and conscience.

But speculative philosophy is a system likewise. I do not mean in its results, for these include not one system, but many systems, various and

antagonistic as an army where every man's hand is against his fellow; but I mean that it is a system in its claims and principles. A common object, a common method, a common instrumentality pervade all systems of speculation, however much they may vary in their arbitrary starting-points and in their ultimate conclusions. It is right that the hand of an admiring disciple should draw the portrait and thus remove all suspicion as to the likeness, lest it should be said either that ignorance has misconceived, or prejudice perverted it. "Speculative thinking," says a distinguished professor, "is to be regarded as distinct from that which is barely reflective and discursive. They are distinguished in this respect, that the latter is a posteriori, the former a priori; the one deserving and critical, the other constructive. Reflective thinking must have its object given, whether that object be barely perceived, or whether it be the duly formed notion of a thing. Speculative thinking originates its own thoughts. It evolves them out of itself by an inward logical necessity, and constructs an entire system of such a nature that each single thought implicitly supposes the whole [2]."

Hence we are enabled to compare the dogmatic faith and speculative thought, as systems, each with its distinctive peculiarities, and to perceive not alone their entire dissimilarity, but their absolute and active antagonism.

I The objects respectively proposed by them are

different. The objects of speculation are solely intellectual. It not only seeks no alliance with the moral wants, but it formally disdains and repudiates them. So complete is the separation that "if the religious feeling is touched in any degree," that is, if hope, or fear, or love, or gratitude, or sympathy towards a Supreme Being be called into play, "this is proof enough to the speculative theologian," I again quote his own language, "that his speculative labours must have miscarried, and he hesitates not for one moment to pull it down to the ground, however much trouble it may have cost him." The reason assigned for this repudiation is not simply the irregularity of the moral emotions and their consequent tendency to disturb the calm and accurate processes of the reason, but their variability. The religious consciousness is held to be modified by personal constitution, temperament, and habit. Every mind and every society forms its own type of piety, and from the piety developes its own theology. Each theology is equally true, because it reflects with equal accuracy the religious consciousness that gives it birth. No thinker can assert his own belief to be more true than any other man's belief without "immodesty and presumption." What is asserted to be the "inexorable strictness" of the speculative mode, finds its natural issue in an unlimited diversity of belief. Hence it is chargeable with the inconsistency of violating the moral consciousness which it affirms to be the primal spring of its own

life. This act of intellectual suicide drains away its own life-blood [3].

Christian theology protests equally against the adequacy and against the dignity of such thinking. We charge it with inadequacy because at best it only satisfies and only professes to satisfy one part of man's compound nature. It meets the difficulties of the head, at least attempts to do so, but neither quiets the uneasiness of the conscience nor satisfies the wants of the affections, nor supplies the guidance needed by the will. We charge it with frivolousness because by isolating itself from the practical wants of man it lowers the dignity of the reason itself.

I do not depreciate the greatness of the intellect, or the subtlety of its powers. Speculative thinking tasks its energies to the utmost. A mind conversant with such studies rises into the highest sphere of pure intellect and exercises gifts worthy of all admiration. Whether conscience and will are not diviner yet, inasmuch as the intellect is but their instrument, may well be questioned. But if we decide that reason is monarch over all other faculties, we must acknowledge that a monarch needs a dominion worthy of his dignity. But reason confined to the limits of its own speculations, and forbidden to exercise active control, is a monarch without an empire; as if a man should reign over a kingdom without subjects and think it nobler to rule a desert, himself its sole monarch and sole inhabitant, than a populous empire rich in activity and wealth. The practical result is to divide

the living man into two halves, the one all feeling without thought, the other all thought without feeling. The dislocation destroys the greatness of them both. The sun shining in the midst of the firmament and filling a rejoicing world with beauty, is glorious and admirable ; but a sun without a firmament to fill, or a world to brighten, would be a sun no longer, a strange and portentous paradox.

Such a system is speculative in every sense of the word. It not only looks into itself as into a glass, and gathers its notions from the self reflected in it, but it is speculative in the ordinary meaning of doubtfulness and uncertainty. It is devoid of evidence and substantial argument. Severing itself from man's practical wants and conflicts, it ceases to have any foothold in the actual and working world. It lives in a cloudland of its own, and, like the gods of Epicurus, looks down in idle indifference on the struggles and sufferings of the soul. It becomes a mere display of the powers of the intellect, like an earthly firework scattering its bright sparks for a few moments into the darkness, as useless as it is beautiful. It dazzles the eye for a moment and passes away, leaving the stars in the clear heavens looking down from their changeless orbits, cloudless and glorious as before.

The faith delivered to the saints is wholly different, and in the difference as much higher as heaven is higher than earth. Far from its Divine Author is any such miserable patchwork as shall

take account of some one part only of the nature he has Himself bestowed, and shall leave the rest to pine and die. The faith meets every part of man. To supply his practical wants, to alleviate his sorrows, to remedy his ruin, to throw light upon his darkness, and make even the valley of Baca a threshold into glory, is its one all-pervading object. It does not soar heartlessly above us like some bright angel of another world, torturing our human hearts by the vision of a serenity beyond our reach. But it comes like an archangel on an errand of mercy, and walks to and fro our world, a ministering spirit of light and joy. It does not disdain the earthly soil and earthly atmosphere, but imitates the Son of God Incarnate, as He brightened our earth with His smiles and consecrated it with His tears. The faith is in every part of it intensely practical. Doctrines are but the statement of God's mode of saving us. Even the subtle refinements of the Athanasian Creed are practical, for they are directed to preserve from heretical refinement the plain and blessed truth of the nature and office of our Saviour. Its loftiest heights of truth are like the mountain ranges, nursing-parents of the rivers that water the lovely vales beneath, and fill them with fertility and joy. The faith reflects the perfections of its Author, as like a cloudless sun He fills the spiritual firmament with life and immortality.

II The methods respectively pursued by the two systems are different. Speculative philosophy is

solely subjective. It begins by taking for granted certain primary ideas, such as were the numbers of Pythagoras, the atoms of Lucretius, the monads of Leibnitz, the ego and the non-ego of Fichte. From these it constructs its scheme by a process of deduction. It thus reverses the foundations of all true knowledge. For speculative reasoning belongs to the childhood of the human intellect, while experimental reasoning is the weapon of its maturity. The one gives facts, the other theories. The one describes the world as God has made it; the other constructs a world as the thinker supposes that it ought to be made. The one presents a reality, the other exhibits a dream.

The difference between the two modes of reasoning is too familiar to this audience, and has too recently been discussed with eloquence and force from this place, to require that I should dwell upon it^a. It only remains to apply it to my present argument. That speculative thinking is deductive is but feebly denied [4]; but it is asserted that Christian dogma as it exists in creeds and formularies is deductive likewise. Doctrines have been boldly and sweepingly described as human theories, and if they were based on deduction they would be liable to the charge; but they are inductive, and rest on exactly the same position, only with far higher elements of certainty, as the truths of natural science.

I do not depreciate the proper value of deduction.

^a Mozley's Bampton Lectures for 1865. Lect. ii.

It enters largely into every sustained course of reasoning. Nor do I deny that many religious lessons and some points of doctrine are gained by this process. Infant baptism, for instance, is nowhere directly asserted in Scripture, but is clearly deduced from direct assertions. Our Church declares what is contained in Holy Scripture, and what is gathered from it and proved by it, to be of equal authority. But, in proportion as the links of proof are lengthened, a degree of uncertainty, although it may be indefinitely small, hangs about the process. Even this, however, is absent from "the faith" as embodied in the Nicene Creed. For not one of its articles rests on deduction, but on the direct positive assertions of the Word. The immediate voice of God Himself alone renders doctrine binding upon the conscience. The process of gathering these truths out of Scripture is a process of induction. The texts bearing upon the special subjects stand in the position of the facts; the comparison of the texts with each other corresponds to the generalisation from the facts; and the doctrine answers to the scientific truth. The technical statement, like the scientific formula, is but the assertion of the fact [5].

Whatever authority therefore is due to the Scriptures, is due to the doctrines generalised from them, in the same way that the accuracy of a scientific conclusion depends upon the accuracy of the data from which it is drawn. If the truth of the Scriptures be called into question, the truth of the

doctrines may consistently be called into question likewise, but not otherwise. The Scriptures and the doctrines have an equivalent authority.

The technical form and the technical language employed by theology to express the doctrines of the faith arise from the necessities of this inductive process. For many texts of Scripture contain one and the same truth. Take, for instance, the true Divinity of Christ, or the indivisible union of the Godhead and the manhood in His one Person. In speaking of the first of these Bishop Pearson quotes more than one hundred texts. But to require for the clear assertion of the Deity of Christ the repetition of the whole of these one hundred texts would be exceedingly absurd. We therefore adopt one formula, so worded as to express the common truth, and to combine in this one expression of it all the particulars contained in the texts. The Church does this in the Apostles' Creed by the words, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son." When the Arian heretics so refined upon language as to enable them to use these words of the Creed, and yet under cover of them to deny that Christ was true God, the Fathers of the Council at Nicæa made their language more positive, and declared the Son to be "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God." The Creed of Athanasius employs a term of yet more precise significance, and proclaims Him to be "God of the substance of the Father." The Church of England in the Second Article repeats nearly the same

words, "Very and eternal God of one substance with the Father." But these fuller expressions add nothing whatever to the truth of our Lord's true Deity, as the Son of God, expressed in the Apostles' Creed. That one phrase, "His only Son," includes all that the longer definitions include. But although it includes all the truth, it does not specifically exclude all the forms of error with the same definiteness as they do. For they grew out of the experience of controversy, and met its exigencies as they arose.

So it is likewise with the second subject mentioned in illustration: the hypostatical union of the two natures in the one person of Christ. One class of texts of considerable number assert that Christ was man; another class of texts, equally numerous and equally clear, assert Him to be God. Both these classes of texts refer to one common subject, viz. the Person of Christ. The first series affirm one particular of Him; the second series assert another. All the texts were given by the same inspiration of God, and are invested with the same authority. They must all therefore be equally true.

Now, how is this common and combined truth to be expressed? Is it to be necessary to repeat the whole two series of texts in detail whenever we wish to profess our belief that our blessed Lord was both God and Man? May we not adopt some formula to express in a few words, selected perhaps even framed for the purpose, the truth

common to all these texts? The Apostles' Creed employs the words, "Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The Nicene Creed, not more exact, but more full, declares that the only-begotten Son was "made Man." Later still, the Church, pressed by the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies, fenced the dogma by the trenchant definitions of the Athanasian Creed: "Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person." Yet in this case, as in the former, these definitions did not add one iota to the truth contained in the shorter form. The full complete dogma was all there on its affirmative side, and the only advantage of the longer form is on its negative and controversial side, its protest against the opposite heresy.

The same remarks are true of the separate terms employed, as well as of the technical form. Some of these terms confessedly are not to be found in Scripture—such as the word Person, the word Trinity, the phrase Catholic Church, and others of the same kind. From Athanasius down to Calvin, the Church has ever given the same answer to objections drawn from this source. She has ever replied, that although the words are not in Scripture, the sense expressed by them is there. The words are a vehicle to the meaning, a sign of

the thing signified. Each one is really an embodied dogma, accepted on the authority of many texts summarised into the single word. If the dogma be in Scripture, and no more accurate term can be found to express it, it is sheer wantonness to object to the word. For in no other way than the use of such terms can separate dogmas be combined in a common proposition.

By an exactly similar process the terminology of science has been formed. Each word expresses an ascertained truth, and can only be explained to an untrained mind by the long statement of the truth. Such are the phrases, specific gravity, insensible distances, and a host of others. But as the incessant reiteration would be equally absurd and vexatious, the truth is embodied in a single term for the sake of brevity and convenience. Who besides a madman would ever think of calling into question the truth because he did not like the word employed to express it? Change the word by all means if you can find a better, but do not sweep away the meaning of it. In progressive human science, such as geology, such changes have constantly been required, as fresh additions to our knowledge have made the old terms inaccurate [6]. If no such process has taken place in theology, it is simply and solely because the doctrines being Divine and Divinely revealed, and Divinely revealed once for all, no addition can take place to the dogma, and therefore no alteration has been required in the word.

Now on the accuracy with which her language expresses the true teaching of the Scripture, the Church challenges the criticism of the world. If, as with the Church of Rome, the original documents of the faith were kept out of sight, and the theological articles were alone avowed without any means of testing them, a suspicion might be thrown upon the Church's faithfulness to her trust. But the Church of England, like the Church of Apostolic and primitive times, holds out the Scriptures to all men, and with emphatic reiteration refers to them all her authority. The Scriptures are the teacher, and the Church is only the witness. She challenges all men to judge of her faithfulness to her trust. Here are the Scriptures and here her articles of belief. Do they correspond or not? If they do not, let us bring them into correspondence. If they do, then the truth expressed is the same in both cases, whether scattered throughout the Divine utterances, or concentrated in the human formula. If it is the same truth, it must have the same authority. The assertion that doctrines are human theories involves either a denial of the infallibility of the Word of God or a denial that the dogma corresponds with the Word. If it rests on neither of these it is a trick of words and no more.

This difference between all schemes of philosophy and the dogmas of the Christian faith is vital. The process of the former is deductive from hypotheses arbitrarily assumed in the mind itself, and

which have no relation or correspondence with the phenomena of the world and are not supposed to have any. The process of the latter is inductive, and therefore transfers the reality of the facts into the generalisation founded upon them. The dogma taught by the Church contains all the truth contained in the Scriptures and nothing more. The human speculation inherits all the uncertainty of the human hypotheses: the Christian dogma all the certainty of the Divine revelation. In the one case we start from human theories, and the result is therefore theoretical throughout; in the other we start from facts, and the result has the nature of a fact throughout. All doctrines are statements of facts in the sphere of the Divine and unseen, as all scientific formulæ are statements of facts in the sphere of the material and visible.

But not only do Christian dogmas possess all the certainty attached to the inductive process of enquiry, but they possess it to a degree belonging exclusively to themselves. This arises from the greater certainty of the facts constituting the premises of the induction. The facts of physical science are sensible phenomena gathered by observation, tested in each case by repetition on the part of each particular observer, and by corresponding results on the part of other observers. In this way we ascertain the facts relative to the strata of the earth beneath our feet, the chemical composition of the air we breathe, the nature of the electric forces existing on every side, and the

motions of the planetary orbs over our heads. But however near our knowledge of these facts may be brought towards actual certainty, they are never quite certain and perhaps never can be, on account of the improved methods and instruments of enquiry brought to bear at succeeding periods. The astronomers of fifty years ago probably watched the heavens with as careful and accurate an observation as the astronomers of our own day. But they did not possess telescopes of the same power, and the results of the observations were therefore less accurate. For instance, our theories relative to nebulæ have been modified by the fact that nebulæ unresolvable by the telescopes of a former day have been resolved by the more powerful instruments of our own time. This is but an instance of what is taking place in many departments of natural science. A certain possibility of error consequently remains in all the generalisation of science, because it remains in the observed facts which are generalised.

But with Christian dogma it is different. In this sphere the data themselves, the observed and recorded facts, are not the work of man but of God. For instance, the words "God sent His Son into the world" are the assertion of a fact. "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many" is the assertion of another fact. "He hath made peace by the blood of His cross" is a third fact. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is a fourth

fact. In this way we might pass through all the dogmatic parts of Scripture and show that every truth is a fact, the statement either of something that has been done, that is being done, or that will be done by God in the sphere of the Unseen. Now what security have we for the accuracy of the statement, that is, for the truth of the fact? We have the authority of inspiration for it. In this first stage of the inductive process, the observation of the facts is done for us and done by God. In proportion as all error is therefore eliminated from it, and nothing is left for man to do but the generalisation, in that proportion Christian dogma acquires the force of certain and demonstrated truth.

In thus speaking I am arguing with those who admit the first step, namely, the inspiration and authority of Scripture. If this be denied the dogma must be denied accordingly. If the Scriptural books are no more than human books, then I most freely admit that Christian doctrines are no more than human theories; for the speculation of man can never advance beyond the dignity of a theory. But I am arguing with those—and there are many—who admit in the language of the Creed, that God “spake by the prophets,” and believe these books to be, in the language of our own Articles, “God’s Word written,” and yet call into question the binding character of Christian dogma. To them I reply that the books and the dogma must stand or fall together. In exact proportion as the link uniting

them is strong and indissoluble, in that proportion the full Divine authority of the book exists in the dogma.

III The two systems are sharply contrasted in the instruments they employ. In speculative philosophy they are solely human. Not only does its theory necessarily involve this, but it positively excludes any other action but that of the human mind, and therefore squares all existence to a human rule. It rejects all help from without, and derives its primary ideas, as well as its subsequent deductions, from within. From this narrow starting-point it claims to soar through the universe of created and uncreated life, and to evolve out of its own consciousness a complete system of the world. It professes to possess in itself the key to all secret mysteries, and to explain the eternal laws of the immense whole of intelligent and unintelligent existence.

The claim involves the most prodigious assumptions; and if these are false the superstructure must be as unstable as its foundations. It exaggerates the ancient principle that man is the measure of all things, for it makes one faculty alone the measure of all things. It wilfully shuts its eyes to the limitations of its own imperfect knowledge, and the notorious fact of man's inability to explain, and incapacity to control, the commonest phenomena of daily life. It despises even the helps afforded by the senses and by the experienced facts of the world outside. By so doing it affirms

an infallibility so positive that it does not even need to be corrected by the evidence of facts or squared to their most palpable realities.

It takes its flight in the simple vigour of its own native powers to explore the universe in its depths below and in its heights above, and all its infinitely multifarious and strangely complicated details. It professes to be master of the whole, and thus superior to the whole; looking into it and through it as some human eye scans the parts of a human machine. The very claim is an assumption of Deity, at least an assumption of prerogatives regarded by every emotion of reverence as peculiar to Deity. The thinker converts himself into his own Deity, recognising no superior intelligence to his own. He thus voids the world of any higher mind, un-Gods it, as the lips of unbelief have termed the process.

For if there be higher minds than the human; whether they be angelic or unangelic, or whether it be the mind of Deity itself, the claim becomes absurd on the face of it. For the higher mind must be capable of a higher exercise and higher ideas; capable of dealing with more complex relations and with deeper and subtler mysteries; must move, in short, in a higher sphere, unapproachable by the lower and more limited intellect. To assert that the human intellect is capable of explaining all things, is to deny that any higher intellect exists than itself. It thus empties the universe, so far as its own conceptions are concerned, of

any other intelligence, and stands its own sole and undivided Deity, self-sufficient and autocratic.

In such a system the recognition of a personal Deity in the world, a moral Governor over it, and still more of a revelation from an unseen Creator for the guidance of His creatures, cannot possibly find any place. These ideas are eliminated by the very assumption with which the process begins. They are accordingly wholly absent from its latest developments, and avowedly absent. Christian language indeed survives sometimes, but it is in ghostly words voided of all their distinctive meaning. Thus, for instance, in the philosophy of Schelling and Hegel the terms God, Trinity and Unity, the fall of man, redemption, the Spirit, faith, all survive; but they survive solely as expressive of philosophic ideas, not of revealed dogmas. In this manner the very theory of speculation involves all the questions at issue with Christianity. It takes for granted in the negative all that revelation proves in the affirmative. The entire structure is an enormous *petitio principii*.

The spectacle presented on comparing the thinker with the prodigious problem he sets himself to solve, is a memorable one. On one side is the man; on the other side the world. In the man is a brain that toils for a few short years, and then corrupts in the grave; an intellect baffled by insoluble difficulties in familiar facts of existence lying on every side; a consciousness confined to its own little circle of idea and

experience. Here he stands, and over against him is the world of existence—not this little globe alone, but the system of which it forms a part, the world immeasurable even to our thought, mysterious above our searching, and intricate even beyond conception. The two stand in close contact; for on the theory there is no other mind or will to separate them, and by the exercise of its independent volition still further to complicate the problem. The man stands alone and self-sufficient, and glancing at the immeasurable whole proceeds in his own mental processes to grasp, and analyse, and describe it; to pierce its darkest depths and search its profoundest secrets. It is impossible not to admire the audacity of such an ambition; not to wonder at the strength of wing with which it takes its soaring flight. But considered as a serious attempt to solve the great mysteries of man and God, it must be spoken of differently. It can be no wonder that speculation should fail—it is no wonder that it does fail—when the very attempt is monstrous. While we admire the loftiness of its flight we must be shocked likewise at its arrogance. If speculative philosophy exhibits the ambition of an archangel, what wonder that it should share an archangel's fall[7].

Speculation carries the cause of its failure in itself, since it begins by denying what it should be its object to ascertain. For if there exists in the world a higher intellect than man's, and if this intellect

exercises in the higher sphere the same activity, what wonder if the two cross and contradict each other? Suppose such an intellect to exist and to be infinite, and to an unerring perfection of wisdom to add an unlimited power, so that it is not only able to construct a Cosmos in idea, but to give absolute immediate effect to its ideas by the very force of will. What would such a mind be but God? For thus He is ever described in Scripture as creating and constructing by no use of secondary instruments, but by the omnipotence of His own Word. "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." Such an exercise of self-existing and self-contained prerogative is natural to Him who is eternal in duration as well as infinite in being, for His everlasting "now" gives permanence to what He conceives, and by conceiving creates. But such a work is as incredible in the scale of manhood, as it is gloriously consistent in the scale of Godhead.

As an intellectual exercise metaphysical studies may stand in competition for interest and disciplinary value with any other branch of study. Nor should we question but that there are a true philosophy and a true science, the hand-maids of truth and the nursing-mothers of adoring love and devoted service. St. Paul's language implies this. He warns his converts not against philosophy altogether, but against philosophy of a false kind. Thus he warns the Colossians: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,"

and then he explains the source of the deceitfulness: "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ^a." His words to Timothy are of the same character: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust"—the deposit of divinely-inspired doctrine—"avoiding profane and vain babblings" (τὰς βεβήλους κενοφάνειας)—the vain empty boastings of a self-deifying wisdom—"and oppositions of science, falsely so called." The very words imply a true philosophy and a true science. If philosophy be the knowledge of the moral, and science the knowledge of the physical causes of things, or in whatever other way they may be distinguished, they both must have their highest seat before the throne of God, where in the primal fountain of the Divine will all causes have their being. The faith once delivered to the saints is a revelation of God and from God, and as the Worker is greater than His works, it affords the nearest approach to a knowledge of all created and uncreated mysteries possible to us in this world. But when philosophy stands in defiant hostility to revelation, and dethroning Christianity from its seat, claims to be itself the self-sufficient teacher and measure of truth, it assumes a totally different character. We cannot wonder at the energy of the inspired denunciation. The very object of such a philosophy is an impersonated unbelief, and its first principle a lie.

The contrast presented by the dogmatic faith is

^a Col. ii. 8.

sharp and strong. Speculative philosophy discards any other instruments than the human. But the faith does not run into the opposite extravagance and reject any other instrument of knowledge than the Divine. In this temperate wisdom it bears the signature of God and reflects His attributes. God is the same in nature as in revelation, and has not so constructed His word as to supersede or contradict His works. He has so framed His world as to employ and stimulate our natural powers up to their highest reach, and only where they necessarily fail has He bestowed His own Divine teaching to reveal what lies beyond their reach. God has not given us His Word to teach us natural science, because here the facts lie within sensible experience, and the path into a knowledge of them, however laborious and difficult, is yet accessible to the human intellect and the efforts of successive ages. Nor in revealing things superhuman has He formulated and methodised the revelation, because this also we are capable of doing for ourselves, and the very form of the revelation in its contact with our human wants has served to direct and stimulate the effort. But where, from the very nature of things, what we needed to know for life and peace lies beyond our searching out, there, and there alone He has given us His revelation, unveiling with His own blessed hands the smile of His face and the secrets of the world to come.

This is equally true in regard to the doctrinal teaching of Scripture and the historical narratives.

We might discover a philosophy of man; but by what faculties could we ever frame a philosophy of God? His everlasting counsels before the world began; His purposes of mercy towards our race; the plan schemed, in consistency with His own attributes and the interests of the universe He governs, for our justification and sanctification; His designs for the future in the glorification of His redeemed people, and the establishment over this sin-stained world of a final kingdom of righteousness and peace,—could be found out by no conceivable human means. Where the thing to be known is human, human faculties are left to discover it; where the thing to be known is Divine, a Divine inspiration has revealed it.

This truth lies at the foundation of the whole question discussed in these lectures, and does not need to be amplified. But it is necessary to note that it applies to the facts of Scripture as closely as to its doctrines. It is the strength of Christianity, that its feet are on this earth of ours while its soaring head is in the skies. It is bound up in the history of the actual world and of races still existing; of one race above all, standing in its mysterious life and equally mysterious isolation, the undying monument of a historic faith. The doctrines relative to the work and office of Christ are inextricably bound up with the facts relative to His life, and to the national platform on which He stood with the prophetic diadem on His brow, the manifest Messiah and the hope of all the ends of the earth. It was impossible for us to know

the doctrines without knowing the facts ; and as the doctrines and the facts were welded together in the links of the same Divine plan, so the certainty of the one is bound up in the certainty of the other.

There is, however, this difference between the two : the doctrines were not knowable by man without a revelation ; the facts were among things knowable, but yet in the order of human results could not be known without an inspired revelation to attest them. The circumstance that human history acknowledges itself to know nothing with certainty belonging to a remoter date than eight hundred years before Christ, and that events falling long within this period are to our own day the unsettled subjects of endless debate, suffices for my purpose [8]. If it was necessary for us to know ancient facts, by an authoritative revelation alone could the knowledge be conveyed. This is a large subject, and rich in instructive thought, but it is a landmark alone in my present argument, and the course of my enquiry hurries us on beyond it.

I have now compared the dogmatic faith with speculative philosophy in three vital particulars : in the objects sought, the method of enquiry pursued, and the instruments employed ; and on all three have shown them to be distinguished from each other by irreconcilable differences. On no reasonable grounds whatever can they be identified. To call the faith a form of speculation, and its doctrines human theories, may be a convenient appeal to prejudice, or an illusion palmed uncon-

sciously on the mind itself; but it is a use of words totally irreconcilable with the plain facts of the case, and any honest enquiry must utterly dissipate it.

Here again, as in other cases, the appeal lies to the undeniable facts of human history. Speculation should no more shrink from this test than revelation. A comparison of the theory of "the faith once delivered to the saints" with the facts of the past has shown that such a faith actually exists, and is in its substance identical with the faith of apostles and prophets as contained in the Canonical Scriptures. Its history is like the unbroken course of some stately river, ever flowing onwards from its first rise in the apostolic age towards the glorious ocean of the prophetic future, ever widening and deepening as it flows, and from every bright wave echoing the everlasting song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." But the history of speculation is totally different. It is a weary tale of ceaseless effort and of ceaseless failure. It is not one river, but many; a hundred streams, now wasted in the barren sands, now stagnating in the malarious marsh, now evaporating by simple inanition, earth-born and earthly.

The progress of speculative thought has been like the conduct of a man bewildered in some dense and trackless forest. Brought to his present spot by some able and faithful guide, he has now in some way or another been deprived of his

assistance, and is left to shift for himself. He has no knowledge whatever to begin with, for he was never here before, and having neither chart nor compass, is devoid of all data beyond what he can gain by his own consciousness. He proceeds after a while in search of a path of escape from the silent and solitary forest into the green meadows and smiling scenes of happy industry in the distance. From the dead level where he stands no glimpse of the distance can be gained. The tops of the tall trees close the boundary of view on every side, and if he climbs them he but sees the depth and boundless extent of the mysterious circle wrapping him in on all sides. He is left face to face with himself and the problem of escape with all his man's wants and weaknesses to urge him to a speedy solution of it. He therefore makes the attempt and penetrates some distance into the thick forest, till through the matted and tangled labyrinth, or over the yawning fissure, or down the steep precipice, or across the over-hanging side of the barrier rock, he can advance no further. He therefore turns upon his steps, and following his tracks backwards, finds his way to the point whence he started. Then he tries again with the same effort, and with the same failure. Over and over the same process goes on. But meantime the day advances and night draws nigh. Natural wants arise and crave in vain for satisfaction. There is neither bread nor water in this lonely

forest. He lies down amid the darkness, and tries to forget in sullen sleep his anxieties and despair. Another day brings another day's hopes, another day's efforts, and another day's failure; till like many an unhappy wretch in actual life, exhausted with effort, weak with hunger, and tormented with thirst, broken down by despair, and sick with fond dreams of the home he will never reach, he lays him down and dies.

Such has actually been the course of philosophic thought. A succession of new efforts from new ideas as starting-points have ended in a succession of failures, each effort like a faint wave that curls and breaks before it reaches the shore.

Thus the recognition of a personal and superintending Deity, traceable doubtfully in Thales, and distinctly taught by Anaxagoras, became again dubious in Archelaus. The affectionate morality and piety of Pythagoras degenerated into the superstitious mysticism of the later Pythagoreans, and his recognition of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishment after death, into a coarse metempsychosis. The clear and lofty Theism of Socrates, his recognition of virtue, and his perception of the true dignity of human nature, passed through Plato into the disputative scepticism of the Academy. The emphatic protest of the Eleatic School against a gross and materialistic polytheism, and its distinct consciousness of the unity and spiritual nature of God, became secularised in Parmenides, and Atheistic in the sceptical sophistry

of Zeno and the ascetic dualism of Empedocles. The pleasure-loving school of Aristippus ended in the sullen discontent of Hegesias, the death-persuader. The recognition of the inductive basis of all human knowledge belonging to Euclid of Megara, evaporated in the idle sophisms of Eubulides and Diodorus, and the logical fallacies of Stilpo. The idealistic philosophy of Plato, with its strong resemblances to revealed doctrine on the subject of God and the soul, and sin, and the other life, died out in Polemo and Crates in one direction, in the sceptical uncertainty of Archesi- laus in a second, and in the probabilities and lax morality of Carneades in the third. The philosophy of Aristotle, pure if cold, and elevating if selfish, ended in the materialistic Atheism of Strato. The rigid self-control of Antisthenes became an extravagance in the severity of the Cynics and the sullen pride of Diogenes. The natural virtue of Zeno passed into the subtle negations of Chrysippus. The principle of Epicurus, that pleasure was to be found in virtue, was turned by a play of words into the principle which has made Epicurean a name of reproach throughout the world. The craving of the Alexandrian School after union with God was developed into the impious mysticism of Plotinus. Even the philosophy of Locke was perverted into the materialism of Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin, the sensationalism of Condillac, the selfishness of Helvetius, the fatalism of D'Holbach, and the naked Atheism of

the French Encyclopædists. Lastly, the idealism of Descartes prepared the way for the blasphemies of Schelling and Hegel [9].

Thus throughout all human speculation the same law has prevailed. Many great and noble ideas have been thrown out, fragments of revealed truth, or sparks of heavenly light, received, we know not how, through the mercy of that God who has, more or less, wrought in the loftier spirits of our race as they lived and died. But however they may have been acquired, two things are certain. It is indisputable that in the minds of the founders of philosophic schools they existed only dimly and darkly, and were never framed into a complete and coherent system. Equally certain is it that as soon as men began to reason upon them the fragments of truth themselves were refined away and lost. None of them ever retained permanent vitality. None of them exercised a controlling influence over mankind. The one fact is the explanation of the other. What is not able permanently to live is not likely effectually to act. The whole process has consisted of flashes of light for a moment illumining the darkness, like rays of divine sunlight shining from heaven, and then gradually dying away amid the ever-deepening shadows of human ignorance and misery.

I appeal to philosophy itself, and call it as a witness to the correctness of this statement. If it were competent to achieve its objects, its results would exhibit something like uniformity and

definiteness, or, at least, would approximate towards them more and more as it advances. The latest philosophy should present the largest amount of truth, the crown of all its preceding triumphs. Such a philosophy has indeed appeared, claiming to supersede all previous forms of speculation, or, to speak more correctly, to be the final result and climax of all that has preceded it. An admiring disciple declares it to be the grandest, because the truest, system philosophy has yet produced [10]. The name sounds to the ear as if it would fulfil the conditions of success, but the reality is very different. Positivism derives its distinctive character much more from what it denies than from what it asserts. Consistently with its materialistic character it formulates results and calls them laws. But beyond the outside facts of the physical universe, it discards all knowledge, and repudiates its very possibility. In regard to the world of matter, it professes only to know phenomena, and even these not absolutely. "Their essential nature and their ultimate causes, either efficient or final, are unknown and inscrutable" [11]. It thus rejects with contempt the entire philosophical framework of the past, and brands it with folly. A more pregnant acknowledgment of the utter failure of all human speculations cannot be conceived than this act of public suicide, as weary and sick at heart with useless searching it strips itself of all its arrogant claims, and stands forth in its bare and naked materialism.

Positivism has done more than this. It has found cause of satisfaction in its failure, as if to discover the fact were a triumph. It has reduced the very process into a philosophy. The religious recognition of the supernatural elevated by the sentimental school of scepticism into the highest religion, is regarded by Comte as the lowest and barbaric stage of human thought. From this the reason advances, as he considers it—retrogresses, as the Christian believes—into speculation, and finding this vain and empty takes refuge in Positivism, and thus finds its highest climax in the recognition and systematising of its own ignorance. He distinguishes three stages of thought: the belief in the supernatural, that is, the sentiment of religion, is the first and lowest; the process of frittering away belief in the vain effort to explain the causes of things, is the second; and confessed ignorance is the third[12]. If we place on one side the whole of revelation and its influence on the course of human opinion, I believe this account to be exactly true and to be supported by the irrefragable evidence of the facts. The undoubted course of unassisted human thought in its efforts to understand and explain the mysteries of the universe has consisted of a series of efforts and a series of failures.

If a Christian had said all this, he would have been charged with ignorance and prejudice. But who shall doubt the truth of the description when philosophy itself has drawn it? Speculative thought

in this its latest development has surely dug its own grave and written its own epitaph, and written it, moreover, in inspired words: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." In its complacent admiration of the beauty of the monument, it forgets the corruption and death within, and how large a portion of the mental history of man, how many soaring ambitions, how many hopes and prospects lie buried in that tomb. Often in the history of the world has the heart of man borne unconscious witness to its own disappointment and the utter inadequacy of the creature to fill the affections of an immortal nature; but never since men first began to think and feel have such a misery and such a pride, such a ruin and such a complacency, found utterance in a confession so complete or so strange as this.

Thus on every side distinctions between speculative philosophy and the dogmatic faith present themselves to the notice. They differ in their objects. Philosophy looks only to the intellect, and does not even attempt to supply the practical wants of the conscience, the will, and the affections. The faith, on the other hand, fixes itself at the central springs of the whole complete man, and throned in the will and the conscience, throws its blessed beams over every part, reason, affection, feeling, character, and conduct, diffusive and quickening as the sun in the natural heavens.

They differ in their methods. Philosophy relies upon deductions from ideas devoid of all external

evidence and speculatively conceived in the mind itself. Its authority is self—the human fallible self; and its conclusions are loose and indefinite as the authority whence they are derived. The faith, in its formal shape, consists of inductions from Divine facts, generalised from the inspired records by the process to which we are indebted for all the marvellous triumphs of natural science and art in modern times. The Divine facts are themselves divinely given, and free therefore from the fallibility attached to human observations even at their best. The dogmatic doctrines as formulated by the Church are no more than the Scriptural truths in a technical statement. They therefore rest on the same authority—that is on the authority of God. Hence they are clear, definite, positive, and unchangeable as their Author.

But philosophy and the dogmatic faith differ no less widely in the course of their history. The life of philosophy has ever been flickering and inconstant, blazing up into flame here and there, and then immediately dying away again. The life of Christian dogma was steadily progressive up to the Christian era. Then, under the special inspiration of our Lord and His apostles, it broke all at once into glory, rising to its zenith in a revelation containing all things necessary for salvation, and able to make the man of God “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” From that zenith it has never declined. No cloud has permanently interrupted that light; no progression

of time or change has darkened its beams or enervated its quickening powers. It shines like the sun over a troubled sea. Schools of philosophy have been no more than the sea waves rising and falling again ; but the everlasting sunbeams shine on and shine for ever, eternal and immutable as God.

Lastly, they differ in their results. Philosophy has done little for the world. It has not one practical triumph to show. It has discovered no new truth, it has inaugurated no new principle, it has produced no new element of good. It cannot point to one of life's many evils either removed by its strength or alleviated by its influence. It has achieved no triumph of civilisation, no trophy of human happiness. Were the whole swept away we should not lose any abiding or substantial benefit. Were all else swept away and it left alone, we should sink into absolute ignorance, and should not possess one fixed truth to elevate human nature by its dignity, or bless it by its beneficent influence.

The dogmatic faith has given us Christian civilisation, with its national liberty, its pure morality, its lofty benevolence, its energetic activity and enterprise. This is its lowest effect. It reveals all we need to know ; answers every question relative to ourselves and to the Unseen we need to ask ; plants a new life within the soul itself ; comforts every distress, brightens every joy, makes life worth living, and then transforms death into the threshold of

another and a higher state. All this it does because it is dogmatic. Take away the dogma, and you take away the Divine foundations, and in their absence the grand superstructure totters, shakes, and crumbles into ruin.

LECTURE VI

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION

I TIM. iv. 8

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

FROM the barren solitudes of intellectual speculation, the course of my argument passes back into the busy working world and the conflicts of its principles and interests. Neither in the loose sentiment of religion, nor in the efforts of the human soul to meet its own moral wants, nor in the theories of philosophy, can be found either the originating cause, or the formative principle, or the influential rival of the dogmatic faith. But another process of contrast and comparison must be gone through. A fresh claimant starts up in what is called Civilisation.

It is not easy to define what is meant by the word, for it represents rather an aggregate of things than any one single thing. We denote by it the habits of life, social, domestic, and intellectual, which have grown out of the aggregation of mankind into communities. The tribes of the human

family, so far as they have maintained their nomad state, have been found in a condition of barbarism or savagism, rude in habits, ill-clothed, ill-sheltered, ill-fed ; for the most part low in intellect, incapable of either governing themselves or of being governed by others ; the creatures of their own wild impulses, and moved, like the beast, by natural passion and affection alone.

This account of the matter is not without exceptions. There are savage tribes who live in settled communities of a kind, and their savagism is attributable to their isolation from the rest of mankind. There are also communities isolated from contact with their fellow-men for centuries, as in China for instance, who can in no sense of the word be called savages, however rude and barbarous their state in some particulars may be. But it is sufficient to say, in general, that as men have been gathered into settled communities and brought into free contact with themselves and others, a definite and orderly change has taken place in their condition. They have occupied themselves in the pursuits of settled industry, have built permanent cities, have acquired property, have regulated the relation between themselves by fixed laws, have established regular government, have acquired a taste for luxury and enjoyment, and have cultivated the arts subservient to the wealth, comfort, and prosperity of man. The whole condition thus reached represents a very large aggregate of separate particulars and separate influences. But as all the world over

it has exhibited a certain unity in its progress, and certain common features in its development, we generalise the effects into one idea, and call it civilisation [1].

The exact relation existing between civilisation and the Christian faith, and the precise questions arising out of it, need to be accurately distinguished. The broad controversy is represented by the question relative to the priority of the two. Should civilisation precede Christianity, and does it in point of fact precede Christianity, or should Christianity precede civilisation? But the argument must not be exaggerated on either side.

Thus when it is urged that civilisation does and must precede Christianity, it is not necessarily intended to deny the value of a definite religion or wholly to exclude its influence; it is only meant that it is of no use to teach the definite and dogmatic doctrines of Christianity, till men have already advanced to some considerable degree in the cultivation of the intellect and the arts and habits of civilised life. The argument involves three suppositions, each of them suggestive as it arises of some further questions.

I In the first place, it involves the belief that men in a rude state are mentally incapable of understanding the doctrines of the Christian religion, and need the labours of the schoolmaster before they are able to profit by the ministry of the preacher. That the intellect is generally in a low state in savage peoples, and that it is palpably incapable

of abstract reasoning, is certain ; but we must take care that its defects are not exaggerated. The condition of scattered peoples, such as the wretched Bushmen or the ill-developed Australian, reaches indeed to the lowest degradation conceivable in creatures originally gifted with intelligence. The aspect of humanity among such tribes is most humiliating. The intellect is almost lost, and the entire habits more nearly resemble the irrational animal than the rational man. But such a description is very far indeed from being true of savage tribes accustomed to congregate into communities, such as the North American Indians and the various tribes inhabiting the islands studded like gems on the bosom of the sunny Pacific. There the intellect is found possessed of great acuteness and sharpened into considerable ability, while industrial art flourishes in some directions, and has been found in the past side by side with the atrocities of a revolting cannibalism. Such tribes are by no means devoid of intellectual activity. That they are unable to understand intellectual refinements ; that they could not appreciate, for instance, the subtle definitions of the Athanasian Creed, is most true. But if the objection means no more than this, it is founded upon a misapprehension.

I have shown in a previous lecture that the Creeds really contain no more truth than the simple doctrines out of which they grew. The whole Athanasian Creed in its substance is contained in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

It by no means follows, therefore, that because the savage cannot understand the theological definition, he cannot understand the revealed truth which the definition was invented to defend. Wherever the common relationships of life are recognised, and mutual affections cultivated, and the slightest sense of law possessed, ideas must exist, and corresponding language, generally sufficient to teach the grand outlines of Christian dogma. The state of a condemned being, the act of saving one in danger, the love of God in the forgiveness of an enemy, the incarnation of the Deity, the protection and help of an unseen Spirit, are all truths so germane to our natural modes of thinking, speaking, and acting, as to be easily understood. To this experience positively testifies. The details of doctrine may be beyond comprehension; but the great simple truths of God's love for sinners have ever been found to be within it. The records of modern missions, as for instance to New Zealand, Polynesia, and North America, prove this beyond a doubt[2].

Moreover, another consideration should also be taken into account. The Gospel does not consist of the proclamation of a bare letter, but of a message accompanied by a quickening Spirit. No believer in the Person and office and work of God the Holy Ghost, and in the promise of God that His word shall not return unto Him void, can doubt the sufficiency of this Divine agent, alike to open the portals of the understanding, and to break down the moral barriers of the will for the entrance of God's truth. What is

impossible with man is possible with God. To leave out this Divine agency is to omit a vital condition of the case. We must not strip half the truth away and then declare the remainder to be incredible and impracticable. This is done every day, and what wonder if the result be wrong, when the process is so manifestly unjust.

II The plea urged for the priority of civilisation over Christianity in the progress of mankind, further involves the supposition that the spheres of religious truth and of temporal wellbeing are not only distinct but separate, so that the one may be cultivated without the other. It is the common mistake of dividing a man into two selves, instead of regarding him as one indivisible being, and all his various faculties and powers as branches on one stem, streams out of one fountain. The relation between a man's inward self and his outward life is intimate in the highest degree. It is impossible to modify either one of the two without affecting also the other, so close is their mutual dependence. It is not however a dependence of equality. None will call into question the superiority of the inward over the outward, not alone in the essential characteristics of the two, but in the predominant and ruling influence of reason and conscience over the outward life. The outward is but the reflection of the inward. The true order of progress is therefore not by acting on the inward from the outside, but by acting on the outward from the inside. Such as the man himself is, such

will his condition permanently be. True civilisation must not only include the inward self, but must begin there. For till this is raised, all efforts to elevate the outward condition will necessarily and inevitably fail.

A curious illustration of this is afforded by the known tendencies of savages brought for a while under civilising influences, to relapse into the habits of their barbarism directly they are left to themselves. This is notoriously the case with the African and the Australian. Let the force of the superior will be removed, and in the absence of its correcting influence the man returns to his savage instincts, flings away the clothing and habits of civilisation, and resumes the wild, wandering, and shiftless habits of his barbarism. The reason is palpable. The civilisation acquired is only skin deep, or not even that. It is but a thin varnish thrown over the untamed instincts of the savage. The man himself has remained unaltered, and the remission of the moral influence leaves him free to show himself in his own natural character.

On the other hand, there are many instances of true civilisation being accomplished among savages—a true civilisation, although an imperfect one. For civilisation is not the growth of one generation, but of many. Nor can men be expected to lose all the traces of primitive savagism, till the taint has died away in a generation of parents and is no longer imbibed by the infant at the breast. But while this is true, it is also true that a real civilisation

has been wrought both in individuals and communities. The existence of a native African bishop bearing rule within the pale of the Church of England is an instance of the one, and the settled communities of Indians established within the borders of the United States and cultivating the habits of European life afford an instance of the other [3].

It follows from the evidence at both extremes that civilisation must be primarily and essentially inward. Till it is seated in the character, it can exercise no abiding influence over the life. No amount of external luxury, could the savage be introduced at a step into the refined and voluptuous habits of old civilisations, would be of the least effect on the man. But change the man, and in that degree you give him not only new habits, but new principles and powers.

This being so, where are we to find the transforming power to revolutionise the man? It is not in himself, and external influences are too superficial. The moral leverage to upset the old self and bring in the new can be supplied by religion alone. In his untaught condition, when his belief is rather a superstition than a religion, this power is still found competent to dominate over his passionate influences. Let religion be presented, not in its human corruption, but in the perfection and purity of the Gospel, in truths relative to man himself and God equally simple and sublime,—let it be presented, not as a dead human letter, but as a message from God, accompanied by the living

Spirit of grace and truth,—and then success is possible. It is true of the heathenism of savagery as well as of the heathenism of civilisation, that “the entrance of Thy Word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.”

The results of modern experience confirm this in the highest degree. To those who find their life-work in endeavouring to improve the condition of our fellow-men at home among the crowded haunts of London and other great centres of our population, the two lessons—that you must act upon the man, and that religion alone supplies the effective mode of doing it, are the fixed principles of social science. The most lavish generosity in the provision of all outward comforts, if it stand alone, is as great a waste of effort as it would be to fling a bag of gold into the midst of the sea. While the moral self remains unchanged, the man will ever gravitate back into his normal misery, just as a dead body lifted by a strong hand to the surface of the water will sink into the depths again as soon as it is left to itself. But let the man be changed, and he rises by the buoyancy of his own self-respect. Let the drunkard become sober, the profligate chaste, the liar truthful, the fraudulent honest, and there is no longer occasion for anxiety about the temporal circumstances of his life. The contingencies of sickness and undeserved misfortune still remain to exercise Christian charity, and by the bonds of a common sympathy draw man to man; but where this pressure

is absent, the elevation of the man carries with it by an invariable necessity the elevation of his circumstances. This is the true remedy for human poverty, for it reaches to the deepest spring of earthly prosperity and joy.

Nor is the witness of experience less decisive regarding the instrument of this elevating process. I do not deny that education and secular morality can do something, perhaps can do much. But religion, working by education, and carrying morality in its train, is the true instrument, far exceeding in its power all others and far more permanent in its action. To the force of secular motives it adds the sanctions of religious duty and the hopes and fears of another life. Religion has all that secularism has, but has likewise mightier influences of its own, powerful in exact proportion as they are taught with definiteness and authority and pressed home into actual contact with the reason, the conscience, and the affections. Experience in this matter does but place its seal on the Divine promise, for even the warnings of the Divine lips grow into the glory of promises: "Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

III But another assumption is involved in the priority of influence claimed for civilisation over Christianity. The claim implies that in proportion to the increase of temporal comfort will be the sensibility to religious influence. Amid the stern struggle

with poverty and the bitterness of griping want, men have neither inclination nor time for religious subjects. Take away the external pressure, it is urged, and then religion will have opportunity and sphere. That poverty does frequently tend to make men indisposed to religious influences, and in its extreme form brings them into a social state of wretchedness, not included in the Divine purposes nor recognised in His Word, may most readily be admitted. The duty of a loving sympathy with every form of distress, and a generous liberality in relieving it, will be accepted by none so cordially as by those who set the example of their blessed Master continually before their eyes. But if sorrow sometimes hardens and exasperates, it sometimes softens and breaks down opposition. The effect of external circumstances of prosperity or adversity upon inward character depends on such complicated conditions and such personal peculiarities, that no human knowledge can determine it, much less classify it, so as to say that one outward condition will have one definite moral effect, and another condition a different one. The same precise circumstances may produce totally dissimilar results in different men.

Nor must it be forgotten that the enjoyments of luxury and the competitions of wealth have their religious dangers as well as the pressure of want and the struggle for daily bread. No believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures can call this into question; for we have the direct words

of our Lord for it: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God^a." Daily experience ratifies their truth. The absorbing occupations of the man of business, the capitalist, and the politician, and the peculiar temptations incident to their lives, are proverbial. In truth, there is no possible condition of human things without its moral dangers. The seat of the evil is in man himself, and he carries it about with him.

The whole objection is founded on a forgetfulness of this truth. The Christian dogma of the corruption of the human heart is too plainly supported by the lessons of daily experience to be doubted as a fact, even where it is rejected as a doctrine. The purpose of all law and police is directed against this tendency to wrong-doing; and the lamentations of the rationalist acknowledge it as fully as the doctrines of the Christian. To us who believe with the Church of England that "man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil," the dogma explains the fact. The essence of sin is the alienation of the will from God. The human soul no longer moves harmoniously with the Divine Soul, and as the motions of the Divine Soul are ever good, the contradictory motions of the human soul must be evil.

This evil taint cannot be limited or locked up in one corner of the man. It pervades the whole of him. It does not act, therefore, in the strictly

^a Luke xviii. 24.

religious sphere alone, but in the social sphere likewise. It thus affects the entire character, principles, and tastes. What are all the bad deeds of the world, its acts of treachery, cruelty, oppression, and violence—from the bitter word that stings like a serpent, to the dastard blow that destroys a life—but branches on this stem, waters from this spring. Divine grace alone can change the tendency. “If any man be in Christ,” then, and then alone, “he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new^b.” But till this is done, the tainted nature retains its native tendencies under every variety of circumstance. Outward conditions may modify and direct its development, but they do not detract from its activity and force. This is the spring of human repugnance to religion, and it may act as fatally amid the luxuries of civilisation as amid the miseries of savagism.

But if these cautions are necessary to enable us fairly to estimate the claim of priority of influence for civilisation over Christianity, corresponding cautions are equally necessary in estimating the opposite proposition. Those who claim the first place for Christianity by no means either exclude or depreciate civilisation. In their opinion, Christianity is the only efficient instrument of civilisation, and the one in its highest form cannot exist without the other. The work must begin with the man. Effect a change there, and you accomplish it everywhere. A higher standard of morals, a development of the

^b 2 Cor. v. 17.

social and domestic affections, freedom of thought and vigour of mind, habits of industry, honesty, and sobriety, and under their shelter the arts subservient to human convenience and enjoyment, will all follow. Cleanse the fountain-head and the waters will share the purification throughout every drop and rill.

On this system all the ordinary motives for self-improvement and progress supplied by the stimulus of an enlightened self-love exist to the utmost. Not one of them is weakened. The motives of self-preservation, and the yet nobler motives furnished by the domestic affections and the relative duties springing out of them; nay the constitutional dispositions and tastes, either for politics, or science, or commerce, or war, are all there. The native energy of character, capacity of mind, and force of will constituting the heroes of the world, still act under the shadow of religious dogma as elsewhere. The dogma neither exhausts the fertility of the soil nor withers the free growth of the plant.

The objection that the prospect of another world unfits a man for the struggles and competitions of the present, rests entirely upon a misapprehension. Certainly no such tendency is either inculcated or permitted in the documents of the faith. If a higher state hereafter be presented as the glorious object of hope, the duties of the present life are presented with equal vividness and force as the road of entrance into it,—the course to be run and the elements of the

account to be rendered at the judgment-day. If any tendency to unfit a man for practical life be seen in individual cases, it derives no sanction from the faith, but arises wholly and solely from personal defects. Its existence is no jewel in the Christian crown, but a shadow detracting from its brightness.

Nor is there any more truth in the assertion that the heavenly citizenship weakens the spring of patriotism. However plausible in theory, it is disproved by fact. Who can realise the august figure of our Master weeping over Jerusalem and question His patriotism? The deepening shadows of national ruin may not wholly exhaust the sources of His tears or explain those profounder sympathies which drew them from the eyes of the God Incarnate; but they constituted a part of them. They concurred with the deeper emotions of the Saviour of the world, and gave pathos to His words. If His prescient eye looked deeper and saw further—deeper because it reached from the temporal to the spiritual, further because it stretched beyond the perishing city to a perishing world,—His patriotism only caught from this a more touching tenderness and a sublimer depth. In consistency with this example of our Master many of the purest-hearted and highest-minded patriots in the world have been disciples of the Crucified and heirs of the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Who shall count their number and marshall their ranks, from the heroic Maccabees to the gallant men

who fought and fell amid the sultry heats of India or in the trenches of the Crimea?

Christianity, therefore, does not weaken the natural virtues or the motives of temporal interest; it only strengthens and enlarges them by the concurrent action of a religious influence. It elevates them from feelings into principles, and from the uncertainty of a selfish motive into the solemnity of a bounden duty. It takes up the lower motive into itself, and at once ratifies and consecrates it by a Divine and perpetual sanction.

Christianity thus enlarges the area of motive, and widens it to the whole nature of man. In its absence civilisation can only appeal to interest and self-love. But on this ground it is open to a retort apparently unanswerable. A man may reply: 'I prefer my barbarism to your civilisation. It suits my taste better, and on a deliberate calculation of gain and loss, I believe that I shall secure a larger amount of pleasure and enjoyment by a life of wandering idleness, and freedom from all restraint, than I shall by treading all my days the dull routine of respectable industry and order.' No effective answer can be given to such a reply. If you tell him that the moral and mental pleasures he loses belong to a higher sphere and are better worth having beyond all comparison than the bodily sensations, he only retorts that he does not think so. If you talk to him about the dignity of his nature, he tells you that he does not care for it. As a question of merely human philosophy, he

may not be far wrong; for we are creatures of habit, and many a sceptical school has been unable to find any firmer basis for morals than the instincts of nature, the *jus naturæ* of Spinoza. If in despair you urge that he owes it to his fellow-men to sacrifice his own inclination to the good of the race, you only fall back on a plea, proved by experience to be as powerless against the active impulses of passion as a barrier of straw against the rush of a swollen river. Thus the human motive fails, simply because it does not appeal to the entire nature of man. But Christianity brings another and a mightier force. The dogmas of our created dependence, our responsibility, and of the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell, at once enlighten conscience and abash passion by the majesty of God and the tremendous issues of an eternity.

Lastly, in the act of enlarging the area of motive, Christianity increases likewise the acting force within the soul. The human motive can bring no more than a human influence. It employs one part of the soul to control another part. It thus does no more than divide self against self, and initiate a doubtful conflict where the slightest circumstances may press down the balance in either direction, and turn the fortunes of the dubious battle we know not how. But Divine truth brings with it the promise of a Divine Spirit, working in and through the human understanding, conscience, and affections, and investing them with supernatural strength.

The sceptic cannot deny this. If he rejects the dogma of the operations of God the Holy Ghost, and considers it to be no more than the effect of fanaticism, he must yet acknowledge it to be a fanaticism of singular power. If the belief be a belief alone, without any objective reality in the facts of the spiritual world, yet the belief may turn the victory, just as in ancient times the superstitious confidence of some struggling army in the assistance of an angelic warrior has turned many a doubtful battle into a glorious victory. The dogma brings a moral advantage, even if it be untrue. But if it be true, as we believe, it supplements human effort with a superhuman energy. Civilisation becomes the result of two great factors, the human agency and the Divine. God and man move on together towards a common goal. The wills of the two are concurrent circles; man the secondary instrument, God the efficient agent, and a future empire of righteousness and peace, such as the world never yet has seen, the magnificent and everlasting issue.

Such are the two conflicting opinions contending for the mastery. The one places civilisation first in order and influence, and would bring in Christianity to supplement a work already done; the other places Christianity first in order and influence, believing it to be the sole efficient cause of any true and permanent civilisation. Both parties admit the value of Christianity and of civilisation, but differ upon their relative place

and influence. To settle the question we must make appeal to the experience of the past. The history of the world presents us with two civilisations, the heathen and the Christian; the one rested on reason, the other rests on revelation; the one was sceptical, the other is dogmatic; the one in its origin and instruments was human, the other we believe to be Divine. We must examine and compare the two. The differences are as palpable as they are significant.

The heathen civilisation presents itself first. This is confessed to be undogmatic, because it was not based on a positive revelation, and in its absence men could discover no positive system of truth for adoption. The state of mind produced by the long series of philosophies which in successive waves had swept over the world of thought, was an almost absolute and universal scepticism. In this condition Christianity found mankind. That it was no rebound from excessive authority, no rebellion of the free intellect against the bonds of dogmatic restraint, is certain from the methods of ancient philosophic teaching. It is impossible, for instance, to imagine anything more unlike dogma than the entire structure of the Platonic Dialogues, alike as regards the opinions advanced and the method of advancing them. Free enquiry had the most unlimited scope, and the death of Socrates is no exception. His condemnation was due less to the freedom of his enquiry than to their results upon the popular religion and his own unbending

independence in maintaining them [4]. Not only was thought free, but in its freedom it ran in exactly the direction of the free thought of our own day. The modern opponents of dogma only re-echo the thought, and almost the language, of their ancient prototypes. The assertion of an universal and primitive religion surviving unchanged beneath the variations of doctrine; the sufficiency of the human reason; the necessity for free enquiry to correct what was deemed the superstitious belief in the supernatural; the eternity of matter; the constancy of law and order superseding the possibility of Providence or revelation—the *κοινὸι τύποι* of modern rationalism,—were all of them known and urged by the ancients. Free thought had every possible advantage, and the civilisation amid which it lived and flourished should accordingly, if its claims were true, have contained the abiding elements of human happiness and progress. The stern evidence of the facts compels a very different conclusion.

It is exceedingly difficult to realise the civilisation of the ancients. The difficulty does not arise from the difference of their climate to ours, and the corresponding difference of their manners and habits; for it is not impossible to make the necessary allowances for these conditions. It would be palpably absurd to measure the houses and domestic arrangements, or the meals and dress of the burning East, of sunny Greece, and of imperial Rome, by the standard of Western Europe in our own times. In

these particulars the ancients followed the conditions of country and climate at least as sensibly, perhaps more so, than we do ourselves. But the difficulty arises from the almost total absence in the ancient civilisation of that moral element which constitutes the very heart and life of the modern.

The absence was entirely natural, when morals were a theory of philosophy and not a solemn obligation of conscience; when the popular mythology was an exaggerated caricature of human nature in its vices and its sorrows; and when actions, esteemed among ourselves too detestable to be named, constituted part of the services of religion. The philosophic few doubtless looked down with contempt on the folly of the popular belief; but there is no evidence that they detested the wickedness of the popular practice. It is certain that the most illustrious men of heathendom considered the deepest crimes in the Christian code to be venial and excusable, if they were not even laudable. Plato's Dialogues contain indisputable evidence on this subject [5].

The absence of the moral element was therefore no more than natural; and yet it separates the two civilisations by such an abyss of difference that imagination can hardly cross it. The result is to lower our ordinary estimate of the past below the truth. A state of society where the idea of moral purity was unknown; where the relation between the sexes had no religious safeguards; where women were so degraded that friendship scarcely existed except between men; where domestic virtue was

allied with ignorance, and intellect with such splendid infamy as to fill the mouth of mankind; where any bond of common humanity was unknown, human life frightfully cheap, and human suffering regarded with such dreadful indifference as to supply sport to the gentle and refined,—such a state of society differs so wholly from what we are accustomed to, that we cannot realise it. The result is that, finding the ancients so immeasurably below us in the moral element, we are apt to think them equally below us in all others. Thus we fail to appreciate their civilisation, and are apt to consider it much less complete and wonderful than it was. This is a great mistake.

It is certain that if we put morals on one side, with all the direct and indirect influences associated with them, ancient civilisation was a splendid achievement. In external circumstances it reached a height of refinement, or rather sank into a depth of selfish luxury, unknown among ourselves. If on one side their domestic habits appear rude to our notions of comfort, the exquisite and genial temperature in which they lived must be taken into account. It is said that climates exist even in our own day so perfectly tempered as to make the very act of living a delight, and to produce a physical buoyancy and cheerfulness that give an appearance of amiability even to the repulsive features of savage life[6]. In judging of the ancient houses and dress, this must ever be remembered. That what we think rude and comfortless, was not

the necessity of ignorance, is certain from the lavish voluptuousness displayed in other directions. The elaborate entertainments, the costly furniture, the exquisite fabrics used for dress by the opulent, and the excessive luxury of ancient civilisation in its latest form are made known to us by Juvenal and others[7]. In industrial arts the ancients had attained considerable skill. In statuary and architecture modern genius vainly toils to follow in their track. Their idea of physical beauty reached the highest perfection. In the pure sciences they attained, considering the period of the world, a wonderfully high standard. Their philosophic thinking and writing exhibit the utmost subtlety of genius and force of thought. In every branch of human knowledge they have left us models for our imitation. They had large and generous views of human politics and laws. All these triumphs indicate a very high progress and an advanced civilisation. In every particular, with the one sole exception of the moral element, they carried human advancement to its highest point. For lustre of genius, brilliancy of wit, fertility of imagination, depth of thought, artistic taste and skill, æsthetic sensibilities, and keen relish for pleasure, the latest period of heathen civilisation has never yet been excelled; perhaps never equalled.

Yet splendid as was the achievement, the absence of the moral element was fatal. Ancient society perished by its own inherent rottenness. Its enormous all-pervading immorality sapped the foundation

of virtue. The social virtues perished first and the political followed. The mass was corrupt to the very core. Its strength perished by the mere exhaustion of its own vices. The ancient Roman empire, in which heathen civilisation culminated, became like a tree hollow and rotten within, and scarce maintaining its appearance of solidity, till the breath of the first tempest beat it to the ground. National vigour and patriotism perished with national virtue; and when the barbarian tempest overthrew it, it was because the manly virtues survived in barbarism which had died out in civilisation. The whole previous history of the world had repeated the same lesson. Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, all perished from within. Progressive civilisation was retrogressive virtue; and civilised effeminacy fell before vigorous barbarism. Instead of being the stimulant and conservator of virtue, heathen civilisation was its enemy and destroyer.

But if we ask why amid all this blaze of intellectual knowledge morality should have died out of heathen practice, the answer must be, because there was no dogmatic basis for morality, no absolute authority to enforce it. Human law reflected the debased standard of the law-makers, and no Divine law was known to supply its defects. That this is the explanation is proved by two facts which have been less noticed than they deserve to be. The one is that the more ancient periods of heathendom were more virtuous than the later, and exhibit a higher moral standard[8]; and the other is

that they were likewise more dogmatic[9]. For the one fact I refer to the comparatively lofty standard of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where the conception of female virtue is far higher and purer than the standard known to have existed in later times. For the other I refer to the ancient Greek tragedians, where strong gleams of religious truth—what I may call Christian truth—are to be found. Such are, for instance, the intimations of a moral government over the world, a future state of rewards and punishments, and even of a bodily resurrection. But all these died out, or rather philosophy argued them out of the deep-seated instincts of the human soul. Thus we see that in ancient civilisation religious dogma and moral virtue existed together, and subsequently perished together.

We now pass from the sceptical to the dogmatic, from the heathen to the Christian civilisation. Great and specific differences meet us here, and are referable to equally specific causes. They are not totally unlike. It might be said that there is on a superficial view great moral resemblance between them. That the Christian civilisation has not expelled vice or engendered universal purity of morals is most true. An enormous amount of moral evil festers at the heart of society. Here, as in all other old civilisations without exception, a class has been found to gravitate to the bottom and fall beneath the recognised level, at whatever standard that may be fixed. But even here the resemblance is superficial and the difference essential.

There can be no fair comparison between the moral features of our own and of ancient civilisation, either as to the amount of moral evil or as to its forms of development. The case does not rest, however, on a mere calculation of quantity, for that may be a matter of opinion. But a specific difference has to be taken into account, and it is this. In the ancient civilisation indulgence in illicit pleasure was in accordance with the professed code of society. It was both advocated in theory and openly permitted in practice. It bore with it no public stigma of reproach; was not done in secret, but was professed before the eyes of the world. It was not only defended but recommended in the writings of philosophy on one side, and actually enshrined in the service of religion upon the other[10]. The immorality was therefore the consistent result of the public sentiment of society and a recognised outgoing of its life. Or, to state the matter yet more accurately, both the principles and the practice of mankind at that period had the same human origin, and therefore bore the same human character. Nature is a corrupt thing, and therefore its principles and practices, unpurified by any higher influence, were corrupt also. So completely is this the case that we can scarcely blame the individual men, from a human point of view. They did but reflect the character and tendencies of their age.

But with the Christian civilisation it is very different. The great evils existing among us are

not results of a false principle, but of the violations of a true. They contradict not only the positive laws of the Christian code, but the moral rules adopted by society from that code, and what are considered to be the very decencies of our civilisation. They are, therefore, not the fault of the system, but of the men who violate it. And if it be asked how it is that Christianity is powerless to redress so great an evil, the answer is at hand, stated in the documents of Christianity itself, and with equal distinctness reflected in the facts of common experience. It is furnished by the distinction between a visible and an invisible church, a national and an individual religion. Beneath the shadow of a national faith there exist thousands and tens of thousands who do not profess to be religious men, or actuated by religious motives. To judge rightly of Christian morality we must put these on one side, and confine attention to the more exclusive circle of individual profession. I do not deny that even here grievous inconsistencies are to be found. The depravity of our nature breaks out now and then into open and disgraceful vice. With the warning instances of the ancient saints before us, not only in such a case as the incestuous persons at Corinth, but in the case of sainted David himself, how can we wonder that gross wickedness should still be found lurking among professing Christians in our own day. Yet these are but spots upon the lustre of the sun. Notwithstanding them the lofty morality of professing

Christians, as a body, may challenge examination. It exhibits a moral purity, a growth of the social and domestic virtues, an activity of love and generous benevolence, to which nothing approaching to a parallel can be found in the previous history of mankind. The existence of flaws and defects only supplies another proof of the inspired accuracy of Scripture. For the Word of God declares loudly that such would be the case in the Church militant. Nay, it goes further, and begins with this case that series of doctrines which explain the perplexing phenomena of human nature. It traces the fact back to a dogma—the dogma of the corruption of the human heart. How could the facts be otherwise, if, as the Church of England declares in her ninth Article, “Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil. . . . And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated.”

Passing on to a further examination of Christian civilisation, its greater length of life demands attention. Ancient civilisation was interrupted by a series of catastrophes. It was fixed in definite centres of empire, and was involved in the fall of those empires. It took, indeed, a new start from their ruins, deriving from the founders of each new empire a fresh infusion of the manly virtues, and

thus perpetuating itself anew. But the internal decay of these centres of empire and their fall by the mere weight of their own moral corruption, evidenced the inherent weakness of that civilisation. It ever grew exhausted towards the centre, and was replenished by the inroad of barbaric vigour from the outside. But in the Christian civilisation these conditions are changed. Modern kingdoms have already survived for periods enormously greater than the lifetime of ancient empires. Nor do they as yet show any signs of internal decay. A poison may lurk within the body politic, and throw itself to the surface like a healthy effect of nature in a diseased body. But without, and in comparison with the less civilised portions of the world, they show no diminution of strength. So far from the barbarism outside showing any tendency to break in upon the settled civilisation within, the civilised empires are ever advancing upon the barbaric, and bringing, by little and little, the utmost parts of the earth into subjection. They maintain their unquestioned superiority not only in arts, but in arms; in energy and enterprise, and force of will, and the power to govern. The condition which universally obtained under heathen civilisation is exactly reversed in the Christian. Then, as men became polished they became effeminate; now, as they are Christianised they exhibit more illustriously every heroic virtue. Their civilisation was the source of weakness; ours is the source of strength [11].

This effect is itself but the result of a dogmatic

truth. Embedded in Scripture stands forth to light the revealed promise that the Gospel shall be preached unto all nations, and the earth become full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. What is the reversal of the old conditions of the world, and this ceaseless advance of Christian civilisation over the length and breadth of the world, but the visible realisation of the infallible promise?

But further, this energy and strength of modern civilisation can be referred to certain specific characteristics distinguishing it from every other development of civilisation previously existing. And what is more, each one of these characteristics can be referred to a dogmatic truth by a connection so close and necessary, that, if the dogma be true, these characteristics could not fail to exist. The dogma explains the fact; and the fact in return verifies and authenticates the dogma.

I First in the list is the importance placed in the Christian civilisation upon the individual man. Ancient heathenism and modern rationalism alike complain of this, and place their hopes on the great whole of humankind, and not on its individual units. Yet security to person and personal rights must be admitted to be the first condition of civilised progress. With Christian society this regard to the individual is the result not of one dogma but of many. It is in part the reflection of the Divine personality. The one man supplies the starting-point of our conceptions of the one

God. In part it arises from the dogma of the immortality of the soul. Each man, whatever may be his station, position, condition, becomes of infinite value because he is a man; and, as a man, carries within his breast an immortal self of priceless value, wide capacities, and everlasting life. Hence flow individual responsibility, individual sin, individual faith with all its fruits, individual salvation. Each one is the object of a redeeming Saviour's atonement, and may be the subject of a sanctifying Spirit's work. Each one is dealt with by a special Providence here; each one will have to render a separate account at the judgment-seat hereafter. When an individual is invested with such tremendous interests, he cannot fail to recognise the dignity of human nature in himself, and to acknowledge it in others [12].

II From this again flow the relative obligations of man to man, breaking down the intense and unmitigated selfishness distinctive of heathen morality. The natural principle of self-love could not fail to generate selfishness so long as men regarded themselves as independent and autocratic; *quisque sui juris*, each a law to himself and owing obligation to none but himself. The grand principle of the Christian code stands at the very opposite pole: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This depends upon two dogmas—the dogma of creation and the dogma of redemption. The whole race thus becomes a family, meeting in one common centre and united by a common

brotherhood. The revolutionary dreams of unity, equality, and fraternity, find actual realisation here ; for there is no respect of persons with God, either in the kingdom of grace or the kingdom of glory. We are not our own, but twice God's, "bought with a price." The natural bond of sympathy thus created is converted from an affection into a principle by the positive command of God. Duty to God and duty to man are parts of the same code ; not as isolated and independent duties, but as meeting in one and the same God, and invested with the same tremendous sanctions. Sinai and Calvary—the mountain burning like a furnace and quivering beneath the majesty of the descending God, and the Cross on which Incarnate Deity suffered and died amid the wonder of angels and archangels—both meet in One, and the united voice is love[13].

III A jealous sensitiveness over human life and human suffering is a special characteristic of our civilisation, and, I believe, the great test of all human progress. Under ancient civilisation men rotted and died like brute beasts. The picture drawn by history of the serf population in Rome is shocking beyond imagination. An intense selfishness was the great law, and extended from men to women, not only exhibited in the features of war but in the desperate indifference of domestic life. Sympathy with suffering was no part of ancient womanhood, if the sufferer were a slave. Hence arose the fact, often commented upon, that not a single public

hospital existed in the ancient capitals of the East and of the West. The only trace of such institutions consists of private hospitals for slaves, just as a careful master will provide for his property among ourselves. But general recognition of a man's right, because he was a man, to protection during life, and assistance under suffering, there was none. They might rot and die in thousands, and none cared. How blessedly different is the complex and elaborate machinery of modern benevolence, as it singles out each form of human misery one by one, and deals with it. We think more of a single life than heathenism, either ancient or modern, thinks of the life of thousands. That this sensitive jealousy over human life and suffering is due to Christianity, and only grows beneath its shadow, can admit of little doubt. It is a necessary deduction from two dogmas—the incarnation of the Son of God and the resurrection of the body. The very flesh of man has become great and honourable by its union with Godhead in the person of the glorified Christ, and by the prospects of its own eternal life and future glorification in heaven [14].

IV The idea of a moral and internal holiness is the possession of Christianity alone. Among the heathen it was entirely absent. Their notions of purity were so wholly external, that outward purity was more definite to them than it is to ourselves. A ceremonial uncleanness and ceremonial purification appear to our minds so indefinite by the side of

sanctity of heart, and will, and affection, that we have difficulty in appreciating them. But they were the sole conceptions of purity possessed under ancient civilisation. The notion is apparent even in the noblest illustrations of ancient female virtue. Livy's Lucretia, destroying with her own hand the flesh that had been contaminated by the touch of wicked passion, illustrates the feeling. For why the destruction of the body, if the dignity of the chaste and lofty soul within it had been adequately recognised? An estimate of purity and impurity which is distinctively material must ever blunt the moral sense. The horror of Lucretia at the desecration was as rare as the mistaken heroism of her death. But in recognising a moral and internal purity, we have risen into a higher sphere of thought and feeling altogether. This is the result of dogma. The doctrine of human sin, pointing out the seat of impurity and the doctrine of the regenerating power of God the Holy Ghost to cleanse the fountain of its bitterness, are the parents, and inward holiness is their offspring [15].

V From this principle we naturally pass to another characteristic of Christian civilisation—the sanctity of the home life. Ancient civilisation was gathered around the pivot of collective unity, and on its communistic principle the possible cultivation of the domestic affections was helplessly shipwrecked. The ideal republic of Plato, the actual institutions of ancient Sparta, and, more or less intensely, the prevalent customs

of other portions of the ancient world, reflect the same character. Individual affections perished in the destruction of individual rights. Home, as we understand it, with its quiet haven from life's daily storms, with its assured confidence of sympathy, its affectionate intimacies and mutual obligations, is the distinctive product of Christianity. Its pleasant flowers grow best beneath the shelter of the Cross. Nor is it difficult to specify the dogma that has called home into existence. The Fatherhood of God contains the germ of its development. The relation of the Father towards His only-begotten Son, pregnant in mysteries beyond our searching, and the adoption of the Christian into the family of God, with its privilege of sonship here, and its prospect of a glorious inheritance hereafter, consecrate with their sanctity the duties and the joys of home. How wonderfully does the language of Scripture climb as it were these heights, and lead the thoughts upward, till, from the pinnacle of the revelation, they look into the other world—"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" [16].

VI Connected with the sanctity of home life is the sacredness of marriage, and the religious equality of the sexes. The quiet confidence with which, as a matter of course, without the necessity for any positive and expressed regulation, the Scriptures imply monogamy as the primeval and eternal law of marriage, has an emphatic force of its own to every careful student of the Word.

Beneath the withering blight of polygamy, whatever gives elevation and purity to the relation between the sexes pines and dies. There can be no "home" beneath that upas-tree. But monogamy, too, has a dogmatic basis, for it follows from the spiritual espousals between Christ and His Church. Not only are the prophetic Scriptures full of this illustration, but the apostolic Epistles draw the links between the doctrine and the marriage institution, close and strong. The immortality of the soul, and the personal responsibility of each living being, fling their solemn sanctions over it, while the relations of the devout women to our Lord during His earthly ministry, and especially the Scriptural portrait of the Virgin Mother, blessed among women, invest it with tenderness and dignity [17].

VII Lastly, the identification of religion with practice, and the presentation of the contemplative life as the preparation for the practical, have likewise a doctrinal origin. Here, as elsewhere, the faith settles the vexed question of their mutual value, and adjusts the two by including both as the parts of one life, as intimate and inseparable as are the body and soul of man. The solitary life is the perversion of Christianity, not its healthy sequel; and to call such a life the religious life is a total distortion of its principles. Life is, in the inspired teaching, the time for work. The warning words of the wise preacher of Israel,—
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with

thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest^c,”—find their echo in the graphic teaching of Him whose meat and drink it was to do His heavenly Father’s will—“I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work^d.” Two doctrines, both of them distinctly Christian, throw their guardian shadows over the lesson. First comes the truth that we are not our own, but God’s, “bought with a price;” and next comes on, looking the soul full in the face, the awfulness of the future judgment. Nor does the lesson of judgment end in the distinction between the two broad classes recognised in Scripture, the righteous and the wicked, but reaches beyond it into the different degrees of future reward and punishment proposed for hope and fear. The parables of our Lord are full of this truth. Twice over, in singularly emphatic words and in this exact relation, the apostle St. Paul affirms the universality of the last solemn account of the great day: “We shall *all* stand before the judgment-seat of Christ^e;” “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body^f.” From individual duty and individual judgment must follow individual independence, since each must act for himself, and for himself suffer or enjoy. The principle of independence has, therefore, an origin

^c Eccl. ix. 10. ^d John ix. 4. ^e Rom. xiv. 10. ^f 2 Cor. v. 10.

earlier than the Gothic nations, however much their native character and political habits fostered it. It was already at work within the pale of Christianity, for it was a part of its dogmatic teaching: "Every man shall bear his own burdens"[18].

I have enumerated seven principles distinctive of the Christian in contrast with heathen civilisation. The importance placed upon the individual man; the mutual obligations of man to man; a jealous sensitiveness over human life and suffering; the conception of a moral and internal holiness; the sanctity of home; the religious equality of the sexes, and the identity of religious belief with religious practice,—are principles naturally connected with each other as the links of a common chain. Not in any one of these elements singly, but in the combination of them all, is the strength of our civilisation to be found[19]. They are each and all referable to Christian dogmas, springing out of them as naturally as the branches out of a root, and exhibiting their characteristics as closely as the leaves of a tree follow the character of the tree. To the effect of these dogmas, all invested with the same authority and accompanied by the same sanctions, must be added the personal example of the Lord Jesus Christ. His ministry conveyed the teaching; His personal life and character embodied the illustration of it. He thus drew the lessons out of the sphere of abstract morality into the sphere of actual life. He showed them

to be practicable lessons capable of adaptation to the working world with its experience, trials, and affections. In the sublime perfection of His character they were all tempered together like the coloured rays of one effulgent sun. The stress laid upon His personal example has never ceased to consecrate the activities of Christian obedience. His doctrine becomes, through the operation of God the Holy Ghost, a self-developing force, moulding from within the whole character and conduct of His disciples into the likeness of His own perfections, by an influence at once as silent and as pervasive as the life that breaks out in spring-time through every root, and branch, and leaf. The love we bear to our Master, and the absorbing concentration of every hope, feeling, and emotion in His blessed person and atoning work, at once give sweetness to obedience here, and ripen the soul for the full fruition of the hereafter, when we shall be like Him, "for we shall see Him as He is."

Now if none of these seven principles had any influence in heathen civilisation, but are all characteristic of the Christian; if, when the corresponding dogmas were unknown they were unknown, and wherever the dogmas have been preached they have become influential; if all the world over, wherever the Gospel has been proclaimed, and under every diversity of race and climate the same teaching has been followed by the same effects, one conclusion only can follow. The differences distinguishing Christian from heathen civilisation

must be due to the difference of its principles; and these principles are the dogmas of the Christian faith. The conclusion is confirmed by the further fact that the activity of the influence is exactly proportioned to the activity of the dogmatic belief. That the character of our civilisation has spread beyond the circle of believers in dogma, and leavens more or less the entire community, is most true. It would be strange indeed if it were otherwise. The wide-spreading influence of moral principles can no more be confined within a limited circle than the light can be confined to one portion of the firmament and excluded from the rest. But that among the believers of the dogmatic faith the distinctive principles of Christian civilisation exist with the greatest intensity, admits of an easy proof. Count the charities of the Church of Christ,—or rather they cannot be counted, for their number and extent, as they flow in ten thousand streams of benevolence throughout the length and breadth of the land, utterly defy calculation,—then look to that portion of our community lying beyond and without the Church, and again count their charities, if indeed you can find them to count. I do not deny their existence, but certainly in contrast with the flow of Christian activity they are no more than the summer rill in contrast with the strong deep river bearing navies on its breast.

Lastly, it should be observed that these effects on our civilisation are not due to the Church, but to

Christianity and to the action of its primary principles. Christianity has called the Church into existence, not the Church Christianity [20]. Great and noble has been the mission of the Church, blessed and beneficent her influence; but the revealed truth entrusted to her keeping is greater than herself. She is a witness to her glorified Master, and in the sense of her own dignity to forget for a moment the undivided supremacy of her living Head, is to cut away the ground beneath her own feet. The chased and ornamental cup is beautiful to the eye, but its use is to convey the water to the parched lips of the dying man. The failing senses of the suffering wretch will not heed the beauty of the cup if it be empty of the living water. The glory of the Church is in the faith committed to her charge; and her life and strength are both alike laid up in Him whom the faith represents as "the way, the truth, and the life," and on whose brow the adoring hands of the saints place the triple crown, Prophet, Priest, King. Not to the Church alone, as from the fifth century onwards she maintained the light amid the thick darkness of the middle ages, but to the revealed truth entrusted to her charge, are we indebted for our civilisation. Its birth-place lies higher up the stream of time, even in the times of our Lord and His apostles. There the Sun of righteousness arose; and in proportion as the Church of succeeding times has been faithful or faithless to her trust, in that exact proportion have His beams brightened the world with

liberty and peace, and consecrated its transient struggles with the prospect of an endless immortality.

In this, as in all other respects, the claims and assertions of the revealed Scriptures find their verification in the actual facts of history. St. John in his vision of the New Jerusalem saw "a pure river of water of life" proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and on either side of it the tree of life, whose "leaves were for the healing of the nations^h." The inspired description of the result is full of grandeur: "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: . . . And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." That completed glory will but be the result of agencies already at work, but the full meridian day of which our Christian civilisation is the early dawn. We are taught indeed that He to whom it belongs will come to establish His own kingdom of righteousness and peace; but the glory of that kingdom of the future will be the crown and climax of a work already begun in the present. The hallelujahs of the saints in glory will but re-echo the promise, and place the seal of their experience on its fulfilment: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

^h Rev. xxii. 1-2.

LECTURE VII

CONSCIENCE, AND ITS RELATION TO THE FAITH

2 COR. i. 12

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

IT is in entire accordance with the moral purposes and with the structure of revelation that Holy Scripture contains no theory of the conscience. Appeals to its verdict are frequent; but they assume its existence and functions as a fact, and do not explain its nature or its constituents as a philosophy. The divinely-inspired references thus supply materials for a judgment by furnishing what I may call Divine observations on the action and properties of conscience, but it is left to us to put them together and construct them into a system. A devout believer in the inspiration of Scripture finds in its teaching the test of his philosophic theories. The steady light of revealed truth acts like a beacon to point out

the course of safety through the shallows and quicksands and sunken rocks of a most intricate and perplexing controversy.

In the Old Testament the word 'conscience' does not occur. The heart of man is described as the seat of approbation and disapprobation, of conviction, contrition, and remorse. But although the term is absent, the idea is not absent. It is truly remarked by a German divine that the "entire economy of salvation in the Old Testament is founded on the fact of the conscience." Luther, in his translation of the Bible, uses the word itself in two places: Josh. xiv. 7, "As it was in my conscience," and Job xxvii. 6, "Thy righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go. My conscience shall not reprove me as long as I live." From the history of the Fall onwards through the entire prophetic Scriptures, the recognition of an inward moral faculty in man underlies the sacred teaching and bears witness to the words of Solomon: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

The teaching of the New Testament is naturally much more specific, and may be reduced into definite propositions. The conscience is affirmed to be the possession of the individual man; in the words of St. Paul, "having their consciences seared"^a (*τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν*). It is asserted to be the supreme moral guide within the soul; for the heathen are to be judged by it. "If a man know his

^a 1 Tim. iv. 2.

doing to be in harmony with this law his conscience is ἀγαθή^b, καλή^c, καθαρά^d, ἀπρόσκοπος^e. The two parts of conscience are specified. If his deed be evil, so also is his conscience, inasmuch as it is consciousness of such evil (πονηρά^f); it is μεμιασμένη^g, so far as the evil deeds shadow themselves in it like blots; or κεκατηρητισμένη^h, so far as it bears them in itself ineradicably and indelibly like brands" [1]. The self-consciousness constituting the original meaning of the word in its Greek, Latin, and French usage finds expression in many passages, as in Heb. x. 2: "The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." A moral verdict of approbation or disapprobation is involved in other passages, from which I have selected the words of the text as necessarily implying the conviction of St. Paul's own faithfulness in the discharge of his apostolic office, for otherwise there could have been no rejoicing in "the testimony" of his conscience. On the words of St. John, "convicted by their own conscienceⁱ," I lay no stress, because the genuineness of the text is disputed. Conscience is declared to exist prior to a positive revelation, for it supplies the ground of the Divine sentence pronounced upon the heathen: "These, having not the law, are a law unto

^b Acts xiii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 16-22; 1 Tim. v. 19.

^c Heb. xiii. 18.

^d 1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3.

^e Acts xxiv. 16.

^f Heb. x. 22.

^g Tit. i. 15; 1 Cor. viii. 7.

^h 1 Tim. iv. 2.

ⁱ John viii. 9.

themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts." Its verdicts are associated with the action of the judgment. "Their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts (*λογισμῶν*) accusing or excusing one another." Again, in the Epistle to Titus: "Even their mind (*ὁ νοῦς*) and their conscience is defiled." Lastly, the apostolic language implies that conscience may need correction and education, for St. Paul refers repeatedly to the weak conscience of the Corinthian Christians, and to the duty of not offending it: "When ye wound their weak conscience" (*ἀσθενόουσιν*)—a conscience out of health and needing the physician—"ye sin against Christ^k." The same idea occurs in St. Paul's language to Timothy, where he describes the false teachers as "doting (*νοσῶν*) about questions and strifes of words^l."

It is remarkable that the latest conclusions of Christian philosophy, although reached by an independent process, and expressing the result of the accumulated thought of ages, are in exact harmony with the Scriptural teaching. On the one side they affirm the existence of a faculty of conscience, and its supremacy in the tribunal of the soul, and yet, on the other side, they deny that it is either independent or infallible. It is a constituent part of the human soul, but like all other parts, exhibits the weakness of a dependent and corrupted creature. The estimate of human nature, gathered from a study of our moral

^k 1 Cor. viii. 2.

^l 1 Tim. vi. 4.

constitution, is identical with the conclusion already reached in the course of these lectures from an examination of the emotional, intuitional, and intellectual parts of man. Dependence is stamped upon every portion of our being. Man needs an external help; and in every sphere alike that help is supplied in "the faith once delivered to the saints."

In resting on this conviction we follow a middle path with enemies on either side. The position held by free thought in relation to this question of the conscience is in no small degree remarkable. Rationalism attacks us from two opposite quarters, representing two different and totally irreconcilable views, and on both sides with equal vehemence and apparent absence of any consciousness of the inconsistency. At no distant period a critical Review has held "conscientious people" up to contempt, on account of the "vast amount of mischief done by them in the world." A serious accusation is advanced against theological writers of regarding conscience as "an unwritten Bible, a divinely-appointed guide, implanted by Providence in the heart of each individual to tell him what is right and what is wrong." Every man is declared to be able to make his own conscience, in language far too frivolous for possible quotation in this place [2]. On the other side, modern thought steps at a stride across the temperate conclusions of Christian philosophy, and asserts the all-sufficient, autocratic power of conscience, with an extravagant

exaggeration peculiar to itself. It declares it to be the triumph of rationalism that "men have come instinctively and almost unconsciously to judge all doctrines by their intuitive sense of right, and to reject, or explain away, or throw into the background those that will not bear the test, no matter how imposing may be the authority that authenticates them." Thus conscience becomes more than a verifying faculty. It is throned supreme over the entire soul, as a despotic governor; in the language of the rationalist himself, the "measure and arbiter of faith" [3].

The two views are mutually destructive. If a controversial advantage were all that the cause of truth demanded, it might be enough to set the one extreme against the other. The retort would be perfectly fair. If we are taunted with making too much of conscience, we might appeal to the authority of rationalism itself; for in asserting the conscience to be the "arbiter of truth" it exaggerates its claims far beyond the highest estimate of the Christian. If conscience be competent to rule even in the sphere of the intellect, *a fortiori* it must be competent to rule in its own proper sphere, the sphere of moral action. Or if we are charged with making too little of conscience, and not accepting it as a final authority supreme over faith itself, we might appeal to free thought at its opposite extreme; for in making conscience no more than the conscious and voluntary product of a man's own effort it lowers it far

below either Scripture or right reason. The Christian theologian might be content to leave the two theories to fight it out between themselves, while the truth, untouched by the conflict, calmly marched on her way. Certainly the two arguments cannot consistently be maintained by the same hands. It is impossible to plead the verifying powers of conscience, and at the same time to deny the existence of such a faculty. The contradictions of free thought cannot go so far as to give supreme authority to a name, and worship before a throne empty of any monarch to fill it. It would be suicidal to argue that conscience is the great spring of all religious truth, and at the same time to argue that it is but the product of a thousand casual influences—the residuum left in the mind from the ever flowing and ebbing tides of human sympathy and association.

But the cause of truth is too sacred to be rested on any such retort; the claims of the faith too solemn and absolute to admit of the slightest act of treacherous compromise. We may use the acknowledgments of our opponents so far, but so far only as this: that a faculty, of which the very existence admits of being called into question, can never possess the absolute and supreme authority needed for the judge and arbiter of truth.

With this side of the alternative alone my argument is called to deal. If conscience be a thing too fluctuating and uncertain to supply a fixed rule for moral conduct, it certainly can never become the rival of the dogmatic faith, and with this

conclusion the argument against conscience may be dismissed. But its positive claims are more formidable, for if they could be maintained they would destroy the entire fabric of the faith. We must examine them more closely.

The objector argues that his conscience is the individual judge of what is right and wrong. As the foundations of rectitude are changeless and eternal, what is right and wrong to him must be absolutely right and wrong in regard to all other beings, and therefore in regard to God. Any description of God which represents Him as violating this verdict of the moral judge cannot be true, since God is a perfect and absolute being, and to charge Him with moral imperfection would be a contradiction. Any such system of belief is therefore to be indignantly rejected. The Christian faith, the objector proceeds to say, contains dogmas of this kind. For instance, it speaks of the punitive anger of God, and of His consigning countless numbers of His creatures to endless damnation. It asserts that there will be an everlasting condition of future woe, from which all hope of mitigation and all prospect of cessation are absolutely excluded. It teaches a doctrine of atonement by the imputation to one person of the guilt incurred by others. "Such teaching offends my sense of right and wrong, and compels me to ascribe to a perfect and holy Being feelings and acts contradictory to the verdict of conscience in myself. I cannot believe such doctrines,

and therefore I reject the revelation professing to contain them."

I have stated the argument of the objector in this form because it is the form actually taken by the objection in a great majority of cases. I protest in the name of conscience itself against the gross injustice of such distorted representations of Christian doctrines. Such caricatures every member of the Church of England and every inheritor of her teaching must indignantly repudiate. Whether they result from carelessness, or from prejudice, or from ignorance, or from the distorting influence of active hostility, it is not for me to judge; but two mistakes involved in the false representation lie upon the surface.

Part of the doctrine is stated, and part omitted, and the description is false because it is partial, *suppressio veri suggestio falsi*. For instance, when the objector speaks of God's consigning countless numbers of His creatures to eternal damnation, he omits to state that He has at the same time offered free salvation to all men, and that if they perish, it is only because they reject a mode of safety provided for them by God, at a sacrifice no less than that of His own Son, and pressed upon their hearts and consciences with a tenderness of appeal and a force of love sublime beyond the appeals and love of man. Again, when the objector says that the doctrine of the atonement involves the imputation to one person of the guilt incurred by others, he omits to add that this Person has of His own free

will assumed the guilt, and that, moreover, this voluntary Representative is one in substance, power, and eternity with the Being who pronounces the judgment, being Himself God blessed for evermore.

The second mistake is of a kindred character. It consists in applying to the character of God the standard of human imperfection and corruption. It assumes as a literal fact those anthropomorphic illustrations under which alone the nature and character of the Supreme Being can possibly be known to us. If on the one side Scripture describes God under figures taken from human experience, it emphatically warns us on the other hand that God is as far removed from man as the heavens are higher than the earth, and that the disturbances and selfishnesses, the weaknesses and irritabilities of human weakness have no place with Him. Thus when Scripture speaks of the punitive wrath of God, it reminds us at the same time that the spiritual Deity has neither body, parts, nor passions. To impute to God, for instance, the heat, violence, and disturbance inherent in human anger, is not only to shock all our deepest feelings of reverence, but it is also grossly and coarsely to misrepresent the doctrine it professes to describe. It is to bear false witness against "the faith once delivered to the saints."

It is impossible not to regard such controversial perversions of the truth with deep indignation. They are unworthy weapons at best, and never so unworthy as when they outrage conscience in

the name of conscience. The temptation to acquiesce in them is great. Only by their use is it possible to transfer the proper authority of conscience in the sphere of the moral into an invasion upon the sphere of the intellectual. But this controversial advantage supplies a further reason why a high-minded searcher after truth should disdain to use them, because they pervert the very conditions of the question. The Christian theologian emphatically protests against them in the name of truth and of conscience as a libel against the Church of Christ.

The claim thus asserted on behalf of the conscience to be the judge and arbiter of truth is irreconcilable with the claims of the dogmatic faith, not alone from the uncertainty of the verdict, but from the nature and the extent of the authority claimed for the judge.

As regards the verdict of the conscience, the Church may well hold her own. It is indeed assumed that a common conscience exists, and that its decision is unanimous against the doctrines of Scripture. In this case the argument would overthrow the faith by rejecting particular dogmas, and dislocating by the rejection the entire system of revealed truth into broken and inconsistent members. But the assumption cannot be admitted for a moment, and is plainly contrary to the facts. The conscience of mankind is not unanimous in its judgment upon the doctrines of Christianity. The conscience of those who accept the dogmas of revelation has at least as

much right to be heard in this matter as the conscience of those who reject them, if it has not a far better right in proportion to its better acquaintance and familiarity with them. What the rationalist considers to be inconsistent with a perfect and holy Being, other men, not less competent from education and earnestness of character to judge than himself, consider to be the most admirable illustration of His attributes. Not only do men educated under Christian instructions regard the doctrines of the Divine justice, His punitive wrath against sin, and the atonement provided in the death of Christ, with adoring praise, but the same feeling is experienced by persons who have passed through no such educational process and who hear the doctrines for the first time. We may extend the range of testimony still further; for the conscience of heathen nations is so far from rejecting these ideas that they enter prominently into heathen belief and the elements of natural religion, as is seen in the institution of priesthood and sacrifice. The assumption that the common decision of the human conscience is against the distinctive doctrines of Christianity is contradicted by the fact. Could mankind be polled within the circle of Christendom the faith would claim in its favour the decision of a vast and overwhelming majority.

This consideration is not to be overlooked, for were the result otherwise it would indisputably supply a serious argument against the faith. But we cannot rest with this appeal. We must call

into question the competency of the court to fulfil so great an office as the supreme judge of truth. If the conscience of every living man came to the same decision, and the decision were in favour of Christian dogma, that unanimity would furnish no safe foundation for the faith. In fact, the existence of an universal conscience is but a fiction. Scarcely can a single point of morals be specified on which the moral sense of mankind has not differed at some time, and among some people. But this very variability of conscience only makes the claim of its supremacy the more destructive to the faith. The verdict is so indefinitely variable that one man's truth becomes another man's falsehood. So long as the just authority of the dogmatic faith is retained, and conscience is limited to its proper function as a regulative faculty, no difficulty arises. For the rejection of particular truths becomes, in entire consistency with the teaching of the faith itself, the sin of individual unbelief. But let conscience be acknowledged to be the supreme verifying faculty, and positive, still less authoritative, truth can no longer exist. Belief becomes no more than the subjective act of the individual, without any objective reality to answer to it. The hand of the soul is stretched out, but grasps a shadow, not a substance. If men's judgments are to be accepted as the absolute test of truth, all particular beliefs must be equally true or equally false.

The principle involved in the claim of conscience to be the judge and arbiter of truth is therefore important in the highest degree. What a man does is necessarily moulded on what he believes. To sit at the very threshold of the soul and regulate at will its incomings and outgoings, is the loftiest of all conceivable functions. Not a spark of light can enter till it has, so to speak, done homage to this supreme faculty, and has been authenticated by its signature. Such a power rules, by virtue of its office, monarch and lord of all. It becomes a confessed Deity. The credentials of so dominant a faculty may fairly be expected to correspond with the loftiness of its claims. Before we submit to its absolute despotism we must be satisfied of the grounds of its authority and the sufficiency of its power. We have a right to ascertain its exact place in our constitution, and the proper sphere of its action. What is conscience ; what are its authority and attributes, that religion should bow down before its footstool, and faith herself do it homage ? The answer can only be given by reviewing the course of human thought as it has dealt, from age to age, with the problems of moral science. The result will vindicate the legitimate claim of conscience to rule supreme within the soul, but will dissipate to the winds the extravagant assumptions of its autocratic independence and infallibility.

In rapidly sketching the history of moral science one general rule alone can be constantly adopted for

my guidance. It is that where the moral distinction of right and wrong has been denied, the existence of conscience has necessarily been denied; where the distinction has been maintained, there conscience has been recognised. Exceptions may be found even to this rule. Rather, perhaps, I ought to say, that men have been often inconsistent with themselves. Thus, for instance, Hobbes, the first great impugner in modern times of the faculty of the conscience, admits in some parts of his writings the moral faculty which he resolutely denies in others. His disciple, Paley, is guilty of the same inconsistency; for in his *Sermons* he speaks of the conscience, while in his *Moral Philosophy* he denies its existence [4]. But the distinction, although it requires some limitation, yet holds good in general. But when, from the nature of the faculty of conscience, we pass on to discuss the grounds of rectitude, we are still more devoid of any certain rule. It would be totally unjust to suppose that the great writers who refer the foundation of morals to utility, or to the fitness of things, or to the absolute will of God, intentionally impugn either the existence or the authority of conscience.

Questions relative to the difference of right and wrong, and to the practical rule of life, had their place among the earliest exercises of human thought. They are recognised, more or less, in all the records of antiquity. In the immortal verses of Homer we find the idea of an innate awe of the Deity, and of the obligations of moral right. The ancient

Greek tragedians contain the same thought. The Furies were but the terrors of the conscience personified. On the other side, Prometheus is supported under the vengeance of Jove by the consciousness of the benefits he had conferred among mankind. Among the fragments of Menander has been handed down the line, *βροτοῖς ἅπασι συνείδησις θεός*. During the prehistoric period of ancient philosophy the familiar problems of moral science are dimly recognisable in the denial by Protagoras of any eternal distinction of right and wrong. With Socrates and Plato moral philosophy properly began. Neither of them has left a definite theory of conscience, although both of them recognised it. They conceived of it, however, as intellectual more than moral—as in the Right Reason of Plato and the Prudence of Aristotle. Plato's doctrine of ideas, and of the ideas of the supreme good, supplied the germ of the immutable morality of later days. Aristotle distinctly asserts in his *Politics* an inner and divinely-given sense of right and wrong (*ὁ μαντεύονται τι πάντες*), and refers to the *Antigone* of Sophocles as acting upon a sense of eternal right.

The discussion took a formal shape in the disputations of the Stoics and Epicureans, and they still represent the two great divisions of opinion existing in our own day. The Epicureans were the first great advocates of the selfish principle of morals. The Stoical scheme, on the other hand, represented the idea of moral rectitude as peculiar

and independent. They gave force to the idea of duty—that notion of the “ought” which constitutes the proper material of the conscience. From this time the nature and supremacy of conscience was recognised with ever-increasing definiteness. Persius, Cicero, Plutarch, Marcus Antoninus, Epictetus, and Seneca, all refer to it. Cicero states his belief in an innate faculty of conscience with great distinctness: “Ratio summa insita in natura quæ jubet ea quæ facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria.” Seneca affirms its Divine origin, “animus magnus et sacer inhæret origini suæ,” and pathetically laments the folly of the man who neglects it—“O te miserum si contemnis hunc testem.” The familiar language of Horace will present itself to many memories as he describes the real strength of man,—

“Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ ;”

while the graphic description of a bad conscience in Juvenal’s thirteenth Satire will not be forgotten. Thus the general sentiment of antiquity recognised the reality of conscience. But the faculty was not analysed. No theory was framed of its constitution, and the general course of thought pointed to an intellectual rather than to a strictly moral faculty.

The same want of a scientific examination of the phenomena of conscience continued during the ages intervening between the beginning of the Christian era and the period of the Reformation. The Christian Fathers re-echoed the language of the inspired Scriptures, treating conscience in the light of religion

and not of philosophy. Fervent appeals to conscience and eloquent descriptions of it are frequent, as for instance, in a well-known passage of Tertullian and in the glowing declamations of Chrysostom. It has been thought by some that Augustine, from fear of the Pelagian heresy, was timid of appealing to conscience, lest by so doing he should appear to admit any sufficiency in human nature for the supply of its own moral wants. With the Scholastics authority became prominent everywhere, and beneath its influence moral philosophy sank too frequently into casuistry. Their inveterate habit of logical refinement led them to distinguish conscience into the *synteresis* or the internal law, and the *syneidesis* or the internal accuser, and to dispute minutely whether conscience was an act, a habit, or a power. Abelard referred the fundamental principle of morality to the immediate will of God, communicated partly by Scripture and partly by conscience. Bernard calls it "*Candor lucis æternæ et speculum sine macula.*" Peter Lombard carried its claims so high as to hold conscience to be supreme even where it contradicts the Word. From Anselm to Grotius, for a period of five hundred years, the same system prevailed. The province of morality was not distinguished from religion, nor were the mutual relations of the two adjusted.

At the Reformation a new epoch of thought begins. The arguments of objectors to the existence of a conscience stimulated enquiry, and served to clear away ambiguities and to settle what was

before undetermined. The dates of these alternate movements of attack and defence constitute the historical epochs of the controversy, and mark its order.

The Reformation itself was the rebound of conscience from the strain of human authority, and rested for its justification on two co-equal principles—the supremacy of the individual conscience over external authority, and the subordination of conscience to the supreme authority of God in His Word. The importance of the question awakened intense earnestness in its discussion. The controversy consequently acquired a new character, and passed from the solution of particular difficulties, “cases of conscience,” into a philosophical settlement of the nature and sphere of the faculty, and the whole foundation of moral rectitude. The first line of writers on the subject in this country consisted of Perkins, Ames, Hall, Sanderson, and Taylor. Their object was to establish the authority of conscience as the ground of all morality. Their system was, however, incomplete, for the old defect remained of not admitting the relation between conscience and Scripture. Sanderson may be taken as the ablest exponent of the school. He defines conscience to be a faculty or habit of the intellect, whereby the human mind, by a process of reasoning, applies its inborn light to the discrimination of moral actions—“*Conscientia est facultas sive habitus intellectus practice quo mens hominis per discursum rationis applicat lumen quod*

sibi adest ad particulares suos actus morales." He regarded conscience and Scripture as being two related, but not necessarily co-equal means of making known the will of God : "Adæquata conscientiæ regula voluntas Dei qualitercunque patefacta."

This system of thought found an opponent in Hobbes, who wrote about the middle of the seventeenth century. His object was to sweep away the entire distinction of right and wrong, and to refer them solely to the enactment of external laws. "The civil laws," he argued, "are the only rules of good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest. Antecedently to these laws every action is in its own nature indifferent. There is nothing good or evil in itself, nor are there any common laws constituting what is naturally just and unjust. All things are to be measured by what every man judges fit, where there is no civil government, and by the laws of society where there is one." These views, in their very coarseness, accord with the philosophy of the man who held the materiality of the soul and the corporeity of God. The philosophy of Locke, by the rejection of all innate ideas, countenanced the tenet that right and wrong are modifications of bodily good and evil. The sensualist school of morals eagerly claimed his support. The school found its extravagant development in the profligate licence of Mandeville. The poison sank deep into the literature and affected largely the manners of the age.

Against these tendencies of thought arose a chorus of protest. The Earl of Shaftesbury led the way, and dropped the first suggestion of a moral sense or instinct of conscience. Two other noted apostles of infidel thought, Hume and Hartley, adopted the same view. It found a supporter of sounder views in More. The theory was developed by Hutcheson into the scheme of an implanted principle, analogous in its action within its own sphere to the action of the senses upon material things. The sagacious Butler, scrupulously cautious in determining the exact nature and constituents of conscience, asserted for the faculty its proper place in the constitution of man, and its claim for supremacy over the other faculties. Reid carried the question a step further by finding a birthplace for conscience amid the fundamental principles of the human soul, "the ethical side of the general sense of truth, the *communis sensus* which remained in man after the Fall."

Meanwhile another, but intimately allied course of thought, was pursued upon the foundations of rectitude, and the ultimate principles of right and wrong. My argument is however less directly concerned with this side of the question than it is with the authority of conscience on one side and its limitations on the other. Whether we hold with Hutcheson a determination of the mind to approve the beauty of virtue and condemn the deformity of vice; or with Butler resolve conscience into a principle of reflection by which "we distinguish between

and approve or disapprove our own actions ;” or with Adam Smith believe our approbation or disapprobation to be founded on the suitableness or unsuitableness, the proportion or disproportion which the affection bears to its object ; or with Brown refer the facts to an emotional constitution of the human mind by which a virtuous action awakens in us a feeling of approbation towards its agent ; or maintain with Ockham that good and evil draw their sole distinction from the will of the Supreme Being ; or with Cumberland consider that the utility of actions constitutes their rectitude ; or assert with Woollaston that good and evil depend upon consistency or inconsistency with the truth of things ; or with Price that the distinction arises from the essential nature of God ;—the existence of a conscience and the part it plays as the regulative principle of human nature remains to a great degree the same. On this distinction between the faculty of conscience and the foundations of rectitude later writers insist with great earnestness.

A fresh reaction followed. Another line of writers arose, attacking the doctrine of a moral sense as if it conveyed the idea of a mechanical instinct and derogated from the dignity of human nature. They introduce the latest period of thought upon the subject of the conscience. The line consists of Gay, Tucker, Paley, and Bentham. The principal figure is Paley, whose views will be familiar to members of Oxford and Cambridge. “On the whole, it seems to me,” are his words, “either that there exist no such

instincts as compose what is called the moral sense, or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits." On the other side are ranged the illustrious names of Mackintosh, Stewart, Whewell, Chalmers, Whately, and others of whom I make no mention, because they still live to instruct the Church by their labours. These writers have brought the doctrine of conscience into its present shape. Sir James Mackintosh may be held to have laid down the clear outlines, and Dr. Whewell to have most accurately filled them up. The conscience, in their view, is not one faculty, but the aggregation of several. "By the culture of the directing and controlling faculties we form habits, according to which we turn our attention upon ourselves, and approve or disapprove what we there discern. These faculties thus cultivated are the conscience." The compound faculty so formed is not strictly innate, but acquired. It is acquired, however, universally and necessarily by all men, by virtue of the innate constitution of the soul. "The testimony of conscience rests on a Divine foundation woven in our natural condition, that is, on a Divine law ordained in the created constitution of man." "All theories which treat conscience as built up by circumstances acting on all human minds," are asserted by Mackintosh "to be liable to misconception unless they place in the strongest light the total destruction of the scaffolding which was necessary only to the erection of the building, after the mind is adult and mature,

and warn the hastiest reader that it then rests on its own foundation." While the conscience is supreme over the practical life it is itself a subordinate faculty, and not a master faculty. What produces must be greater than its product, the creator than what is created.

It follows from these conclusions that if conscience be "in authority" from one point of view, it is "under authority" from another. It is in authority inasmuch as it is the supreme regulative power within the soul; it is under authority inasmuch as, like the soul over which it rules and of which it forms a constitutional part, it is dependent, not autocratic. If conscience in its actual form be the result of an educational process, either conscious or unconscious, it is so far from being an independent and self-contained law, that it only reflects the external influences that have given it shape and direction. Conscience is never fully formed, but always in course of formation. Whewell's words state the result in its precise form: "Conscience is a subordinate and fallible rule." "Since conscience has only subordinate and derivative authority, it cannot be right for a man to refer to his own conscience as a supreme ultimate ground of action."

Up to a certain point—the point reached in the theory of a moral sense—the course of thought abroad has followed very much the same course, as far as concerns the philosophy of the question. Leibnitz and Malbranche recognise the conscience as an innate love and approbation of the right;

Crusius considers it to be an inward instinct; Kant regards it as a moral faculty, innate and independent; Fichte and De Wette follow him; while Delitsch defines it as the natural consciousness to man of the law within his heart. On the other side Mosheim describes it as an act of the understanding. But the general tendencies of Germany have generated another school of thought. Kant stood on the same ground in this question as the Hutchesonians among ourselves. But this was but a stage in the enquiry among ourselves, a standpoint from which later writers have advanced to a closer analysis and a more accurate survey of the constitution and office of conscience. Among some German divines the tendency has been to fall back on one of the mistakes of the past, and confound the groundwork of morality and religion together. The result is gained indeed by a very different process. The Church-school was in danger of absorbing morality in religion: the modern Germans would absorb religion in morality. The one filtered conscience by authority: but the other places all authority, even that of the Scriptures themselves, beneath the feet of conscience.

The result follows naturally from what is called the higher criticism of Germany and its general course of thought. The definite doctrines of Christianity have been resolved by these critical processes into philosophical ideas, and the sacred Scriptures, with their grand teachings, torn into fragmentary traditions. These processes being com-

plete, religion itself must perish, as I have shown in the course of these lectures, unless some other teacher of truth can be discovered. Modern Germans endeavour to find it in the conscience. Thus Reinhard considers conscience to be a disposition to be led by the thought of Deity ; Harless calls it an inner revelation ; Rothe considers it to be an infallible subjective religious instinct ; Baader and Schubert, as "privity of the soul with the omnipresent omniscient God ;" Hoffman, as "an immediate self-evidencing of God in man ;" Marheinecke applies to the subject the pantheistic profanity of Hegel, and says that the conscience is the progress of the Absolute Being to self-consciousness in man. Schenkel represents it as the source of all our religious knowledge, the central organ of the religious and moral activity, and asserts that the doctrinal as well as the ethical function originates in the same fundamental organ.

Philosophically considered, these later views are a palpable retrogression in the course of human thought, and not an advance into a higher stage. For they confuse and absolutely identify the moral and the religious spheres together, and thus vitiate the whole process of enquiry. If we compare German thought, as expressed by Schenkel, with the result of thought in this country, as expressed by Whewell, it is impossible not to be struck with the looseness and inaccuracy of the one compared with the precision and philosophical comprehensiveness of the other. That the leading minds among English

rationalists recognise Whewell, and not Schenkel, as the expositor of the latest and fullest conclusions of human enquiry on the subject of conscience, may be fairly gathered from the language of the critical Review to which I have previously alluded : "Conscience is nothing more than a collective term applied to the sum total of moral sensibilities we possess, however they may have been acquired, and on whatever foundation they may be based." With this summing up of the history of the past I am content to close [5].

The foregoing sketch throws into view two peculiarities in the history of this controversy. The one consists in the number and variety of the questions brought under dispute. Some of them cannot be said to be definitely determined to the present day. At least six problems require to be solved : (1) Is there such a thing as conscience at all? (2) What is its sphere?—is it moral action, or is it also religious truth? (3) If there be a conscience, is it one faculty or many? (4) Is it innate or acquired, or both innate and acquired? if acquired, is it universally and necessarily acquired? (5) In what relation of authority does it stand towards human action on one side, and towards the influences which form it on the other? (6) On what foundation does the distinction of right and wrong rest? It would not be difficult from the Christian point of view to give definite answers to these questions. These answers would, however, be based on the recognition of the authority of Scripture as the highest exponent

of the Creator's will. But the present controversy is with the impugnors of the authority of Scripture. Taking them into account it may confidently be asserted that in the whole range of mental and moral philosophy, there is no question, even at our own day, so unsettled, and bristling with so many disputes, as the constitution and functions of the conscience.

The second characteristic is, that disputants on this subject cannot be classified by their theological predilections. Great variety of opinion is found within the circle of belief on the one side, and the circle of unbelief on the other. If the independence and supremacy of conscience have generally been maintained by divines, they have also been maintained by free-thinkers, as the Earl of Shaftesbury, Hartley, and Hume. If the eternal distinctions of right and wrong have been denied by thinkers like Epicurus, Hobbes, and Bentham, they have likewise been denied, although from a totally different standpoint, by eminent theologians such as Ockham, Cumberland, and Paley. No circumstance can more fully illustrate the difficulties of the controversy. Weapons of an analogous character have been used to attack the faith, by Shaftesbury, Hume, and Hartley; and to defend it, by Hutcheson, Cudworth, and Clarke.

If, then, the last results of human enquiry into the conscience have been such as I have described them to be, on what ground can we allow to conscience an exaggerated supremacy over the whole

incomings and outgoings of the human soul? Supremacy as a regulative faculty we admit; but this is very different from ascribing to it an absolute and unlimited despotism alike over all human evidence and all Divine authority. The rationalist holds the verdict of the conscience to be supreme over all doctrines, with whatever authority they may be authenticated. A despotism so absolute, an accuracy so infallible as even to supersede enquiry, to discard evidence, and sit above all authority, human and Divine, as the sole and self-sufficient judge and arbiter of truth, is in strange contrast with the surging sea of controversy amid which conscience has its throne. Surely, when rationalism would thus use conscience to shake the very throne of truth, we are entitled to refer it to the conclusions of its own enquiry, and to reply, in the language of inspiration, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee."

It is clear that the conclusions of modern philosophy are totally inconsistent with the acceptance of the conscience as the supreme verifying faculty in man. Either a new theory of conscience must be found, or its claims to be the standard of truth must be given up. In at least three particulars the rationalistic argument and the philosophy are at variance. If, according to the philosophy, the conscience be a regulative moral faculty, it is plainly incapable of originating a scheme of belief, or exercising, in the examination of evidence, the proper functions of the intellect. Secondly, if

it be an acquired and subordinate faculty, needing to be educated from without, and actually moulded by a thousand external influences, it can possess neither autocratic independence of office, nor un-failing accuracy of perception to direct the judgment. It cannot claim to govern where it is itself governed. Thirdly, if it be an individual and personal judge, it can have no powers beyond the sphere of the individual and the personal. Supreme within the judicature of the soul itself, it is totally incompetent to decide in that higher sphere of Divine things, where it has neither knowledge to comprehend the details, nor capacity to grasp the whole.

I The claim transcends the proper sphere of conscience, and needs powers which it cannot pretend to possess. By the acknowledgment of all, the function of conscience as a judge of truth must be negative, not positive. No one claims for it a suggestive and originating power over the intellect. It has an impulsive power to prompt the pursuit of the morally good and the avoidance of the morally evil, but this is a totally different thing from a power to affirm the truth of doctrines, or to originate a scheme of religious belief. Its sole conceivable power is a negative function. Conscience can only repudiate the false, but has no faculties for the discovery of the true. If there are certainties capable of being known, there is in man, according to this theory, no capability of knowing them. But if this be admitted it becomes a question how far the power of discriminating the false

can possibly exist apart from the power of discovering the true. All our knowledge is a knowledge of contrasts. We know evil and good, joy and sorrow, virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, by their contrasts with each other. We must know the true and the false in the same way, and test them by the same relation. The argument is, that a certain statement relative to God is false. But if we are too absolutely ignorant to be able to say what God is, are we competent to say what God is not? If we are not able to say what God would do, how can we pronounce what He would not do?

But however this may be, the adequacy of conscience to the great function claimed for it, is disproved by matters of familiar experience. It would be a great claim to advance in behalf of conscience, to say that it should be the test of other men's actions. It is the rule for our own; but it is too doubtful and capricious to be the rule by which to measure other men. No one man can put himself into another man's place; or without any further knowledge than what may be derived from his own inner consciousness decide upon the propriety of that man's plans for life, or his conduct as a father towards his children, or as a master towards his servants. Such a claim would be esteemed simply monstrous. Each man's conscience is the guide for himself; but one man's conscience is not the guide for another man's conscience, and therefore not for

another man's acts. Certain outward actions we can immediately pronounce to be wrong, whoever does them. We do not hesitate to stigmatise with disgrace the act of the murderer, or the liar, or the thief. But the certainty with which we act in such cases is derived from the sentence of the law and the stigma affixed to them alike by the code of human and Divine morality. But these cases form a very small part of the complicated questions lying for the decision of conscience. We must quit the area of actions on which positive law has pronounced its judgment, for actions not so determined. The question is not whether, if each man was in his neighbour's place, he would be able at once to pronounce on the right and wrong of his actions, but whether he is competent to do so, being in his own place, and standing outside the circle of those associations, facts, and circumstances by which conscience is ever guided in her decisions.

Such a claim advanced on behalf of any man or body of men over other men would be rejected with contemptuous disdain as the very climax of fanatical presumption. But if it be not tolerable in the relation of man to man, how can it be vindicated in the relation of man to God? In this case, leaving all revelation on one side, the Being to be judged must be, by the very force of the name we give to Him, alike different in His nature, and immeasurably greater and higher in His attributes than the person who judges

Him. Nothing but an infallible accuracy of moral perception, and an all-embracing knowledge of outward facts, can justify the claim. Will any man assert for the human judgment either of these qualifications?

It must further be remembered that the existence of God, and His government over the world, constitute a totally different question from the character of God; and that with the latter alone does conscience even profess to deal. Suppose it to be admitted—what cannot be admitted for a solitary moment—that the character of God as depicted in the sacred Scriptures is harsh and capricious, such, in short, as might excite the terror, but never could conciliate the adoring affection of an intelligent being,—yet this character would not affect the evidences of His existence.

The proof of this is mainly external. In what we call natural religion, it depends upon traces of intelligent design amid the creation and the government of the world; and in revealed religion on the miracles attesting the promulgation of His will, from the passage of the Red Sea and the sides of quivering Sinai down to the resurrection of Christ, and “the signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost” attesting the authority of the apostles. To these we add the wonderful structure of Scripture itself—a collection of books of divers dates and authorship, and yet bearing in their unity of design and sublimity of subject, proofs of an intellectual mind,

and a definite plan, as positive as any that are discoverable in the material creation. No doubt it is an appreciable gain and confirmation of this argument, that this revelation contains a portraiture of God calculable to awaken the sublimest thoughts of Him, and the most adoring praise. But if this last element of the case had been absent, its absence would not in any degree have destroyed the independent evidence for the existence of an intelligent Being, the author of creation and revelation, and identified by broad analogies of principle in the structure of them both.

These evidences appeal in no degree to conscience. It is possible to conceive a Deity simply awful and tremendous. Conscience might decide that such a Being could not receive its respect and admiration. Shocking, as He would do, all our instincts of right and wrong, affection would become impossible; yet our dislike of His character could not destroy His being: the moral sentiment would have no power to annihilate Him. We might say that we could not love, and will not obey Him; we might prefer to defy a power we could not resist, and to suffer the extremest penalty rather than voluntarily obey a Being whose attributes excite our fear and dislike. We might say this; and language to this effect has been uttered by the most prominent master of free thought in our own country [6]. The very use of it intimates his consciousness that evidence may conceivably compel belief in God's existence when we cannot

recognise His beauty. In other words, no supposed verdict of the conscience can have the slightest possible effect in invalidating the mass of consistent testimony proving the being of God and authenticating His revelation.

I fully acknowledge that it would be a dreadful thing to find ourselves in contact and relation with a terrible Omnipotence whom we could neither reverence nor love, and yet who breaks forth from the unseen world upon the intellect and the heart with an irresistible might of evidence. But suppose such was our condition; would it not suggest a suspicion that perhaps we were wrong, not He? Would not the thought occur that some prejudice or misconception must be blinding our eyes, and that the moral defects were in ourselves? Should we not question whether there might not be some human source of error distorting the image of God, just as the earth-born mists distort to our mortal eyes the sun as he shines in the midst of the heavens, as sloping down into the winter twilight he lifts his red orb just above the horizon, lurid and awful as the glare of a conflagration.

The distinction thus drawn between our conception of God's character and the evidences of His being and will, finds ready illustration in actual life. Thus, in ancient days, the God of Israel appeared upon the mountain that burned with fire, amid blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, and such a dreadful show of majesty and

power that Moses himself exceedingly feared and quaked. The impression awakened was not love, but fear, and an awful sense of His severity and justice. "Why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die." But that awful terror did not weaken the visible evidences of His presence. There was Sinai, burning like a furnace, and their eyes and ears caught the tokens of His greatness. The visible evidence deepened the moral sentiment of fear, but the sentiment did not weaken the evidence.

The same thing may be observed among ourselves. Many men believe in God, yet regard Him with fear and terror, and under the influence of this feeling banish His name from their lips, and the recollection of Him from their hearts. But the feeling does not change the facts, however much men may dislike them. The feeling itself is perfectly explicable if we turn to the doctrines of the faith. For God is presented as a Holy God, and man as a fallen and guilty creature. What wonder is it that a guilty being, alienated by natural affection, and looking up to this Just Deity as a criminal looks at a strict judge, should think of Him with terror, and shrink from Him in painful dislike? If the dogmas of the character of God and the guilty condition of man be true, the feeling could not be otherwise. But suppose a criminal should plead that the law under which he is condemned shocks his feelings, and the very

aspect of the judge contradicts his notions of the fitness of things ; would the feeling change the tremendous circumstances of his position, as hanging on the judge's lips he hears the dreadful sentence consigning him to a grave? Should the sinner plead that the idea of a God of justice and an eternal hell shocks his conscience and contradicts his feeling of right and wrong ; would not the answer be that this is very natural under his circumstances, but that it will neither change the facts nor reverse the sentence? So it is in the present case. Let the verdict of the conscience within the man be what it may, it can neither change the facts outside him nor invalidate the evidence in proof of them. You say that a God, such as He is described in the Bible, shocks your sense of right and wrong, that is, your sense of what God must be. Be it so—the verdict of your conscience is yours, not God's. It therefore affects you, not God. It is not the slightest evidence of any moral defect in God ; but it is strong evidence of some great moral defect in yourself.

II This conclusion is confirmed by the next step. For it must be acknowledged that in familiar things, the human conscience is not gifted with faultless accuracy, still less with infallibility. It is not accurate in its decision in familiar cases, where the whole conditions of the case enter into personal experience. It is not a certain guide for man ; and how then can it be conceived to be a certain guide for God? If insufficient for the human sphere, it must be far more insufficient for the Divine.

This inaccuracy and this defect in conscience cannot be disputed by any school of opinion. They meet us equally when we look to the past or to the present. In the past, we see them in the acknowledged variations in the verdict of the conscience. There is scarcely an act shocking to our convictions, which, at some other period of the world and among some other men, has not been considered allowable, if not laudable. What our consciences, enlightened by Christian teaching, pronounce to be vices, the consciences of other men have pronounced to be virtues; and what we esteem to be virtues, they have considered to be vices. Acts held by us in actual detestation, infanticide, for instance, awakens no sense of moral guilt in the Hindoo or the Chinese. Humility and forgiveness of injuries, prominent in our catalogue of graces, were defects of character in the estimate of the ancient heathen moralists. The taking of human life, incest, and what has been called even among ourselves the wild justice of revenge, have been, and are still held to be natural, and even proofs of manly vigour. This variation is no disproof of the existence of a conscience, because some distinction of right and wrong exists among all men. Every race and period have had their code of conscience, however perverted. But they are positive disproofs of the accuracy and infallibility of the conscience, therefore of its capability to be the absolute judge of what is congruous or incongruous with God, and the absolute test of truth.

The evidence is the same in the familiar sphere of our own daily life. The inconsistencies of human conduct are palpable, and are only thrown into stronger contrast by the intellect and powers of the agents. There is a strange mixture of good and evil, strength and weakness, in the best of men. Not infrequently the greatest moral infirmity is found to co-exist with the highest intellectual vigour. The familiar history of remarkable men places this beyond question. The clearest sense of moral right may be found side by side with the strongest propension to moral wrong. It must be evident that in these cases the general gifts of the man do not detract from the guilt of the wrongdoing, but very largely aggravate its character and increase its responsibility.

We are, therefore, reduced to two alternatives. Either the conscience and the conduct are concurrent, and then if the conduct is wrong the conscience must be wrong likewise : or they are not concurrent, and then the sentence of the conscience is but the idle decree of a powerless judge. If, in this case, its decision be too faint and weak to control character and conduct, how can so infirm and impotent a faculty be thought worthy of the dignity of being throned as the absolute monarch of the sentient and feeling soul of man?

These plain facts of human experience must be admitted by all men, and there is no way of escaping the conclusion without impugning the accuracy of our moral judgments. For if it be said

that there is no immutable morality, but that everything is right that a man thinks to be right, we only reduce conscience to yet greater futility and extend the uncertainty from the faculty to the material with which it deals. If there be no immutable morality, there can be no trustworthy and infallible conscience. If there is an immutable morality, the faculty of conscience is found incapable of discovering and verifying it. How then shall it become the verifying judge of a Divine revelation ?

Here again, when we turn to the doctrines of the faith, the dogma explains the facts, and the facts verify the dogma. The doctrine of the corruption of human nature removes all difficulty. For why should it be supposed that conscience has escaped the general corruption more than any other part of the human constitution ? The moral nature is the essential seat of sin, and the moral faculty may be expected to show its effects more than any other. The depravity is both in the regulative power itself, and in the sphere it regulates ; both in the monarch and in the kingdom. In the faculty itself the perception of right and wrong has grown dim, inconstant, variable, uncertain. It has lost the energy and force of its primeval constitution. It is placed amid the will and the affections, the very strongholds of sin, the very springs of its life. Relatively to the other portions of our nature, conscience still retains its predominance as the impulsive and regulative power ; but, in common with the other portions, it shares the

effects of the Fall, and thus may become the blind leader of the blind. Before it can fulfil its proper office it must be itself corrected and enlightened, and this necessarily from the outside. The wrong measure can only be tested by comparison with a right measure, and the correction can only be supplied by the faith. So far, therefore, is conscience from being the judge of truth, that truth is needed to rectify conscience.

That the Bible contains the highest and purest morality known to man is the general conviction of mankind, and the conviction is not weakened by the murmured dissent of a few. In truth, the moral code of our day has derived its elevation from the faith, although it ungratefully disowns the obligation. When this highest of all moral codes is brought into contact with the conscience, the moral faculty, so far from being shocked at the dogmas of revealed truth, accepts them with adoring reverence. The objection to the morality of Christian dogma arises not from those within the Church, and who know it best, for they live upon it, but from those without.

If it be replied that the conscience of the Christian Church is blind and uninformed, this only brings us back to the same point, and confirms anew the fallibility and variability of conscience. What security can therefore be gained by its decision? Yet the entire plea for the verifying faculty of conscience rests on this assumption, that the human conscience is, if I may so word

it without irreverence, the standard of the Divine conscience. 'I should not think it right to act in such a manner, and therefore it is not right for God to act in it. I am so certain that I am right, and that my right is the measure of God's right, that I discard all other evidence, and fling away all other proof. Christian dogma makes God different in His nature and actions from what I think He ought to be, and therefore I unhesitatingly regret the dogma.' The whole argument hangs on the infallibility of the human conscience. Give that up, and the whole superstructure falls.

III But there is another matter to be considered. I said that the claim advanced on behalf of the conscience required not only absolute accuracy in the action of the faculty, but a perfect knowledge of all the facts of the case submitted to it. In the absence of this, it must judge on partial and imperfect data, and the conclusion will be as partial, that is, as untrue, as the data. A judge needs to be acquainted with all the circumstances of the case in their minute particulars, and in all their mutual bearings, or else the most consummate ability and the most perfect balance of judgment will not preserve him from mistake. A decision perfectly right on half the facts, may be perfectly wrong upon the whole of them. If conscience were infallible as God, its decisions would become fallible if made upon a partial knowledge of the facts. It is a matter of familiar experience that some apparently minute circumstance may alter

the character of an entire series of transactions. Omitted facts make all the difference between a cruel murder and a legal execution, a kindly act and a forgery, a deed of oppression and an act of benevolence. Could we conceive a perfect stranger admitted into a household and watching the conduct of a parent towards his child in some particular act without having any acquaintance with the character of the two, or the circumstances under which they are acting, is it not very likely that he would come to a totally wrong conclusion, and perhaps impute to the passion or prejudice of the father, what springs out of the purest love and the most self-denying consideration for his child's good? The commonest experience ratifies the maxim, that a judge needs to know the entire facts of a case before he can decide its moral character.

If this be true between man and man, on no principle can it be supposed to be less true between man and God. Conscience cannot pronounce without a perfect knowledge of all the facts of the case.

Such a knowledge it does not possess. Revelation does not profess to be a transcript of the Divine mind; nor is it possible that it should be. The multifarious details of human history baffle the possible grasp of mortal intellect. No history ever written professes to be exhaustive, or to contain more than a certain selection from the complicated events making up the sum-total of life. The Bible professes to give such information relative to the past history of the world and the

dealings of God towards man, as God sees to be necessary for our good, including in that good the discipline of faith, alike in the acceptance of what is revealed and in submission to what is withheld. In every case enough is made known for practical action, but for curiosity literally nothing. In every case, either of revealed fact or revealed dogma, enough information is communicated to guide faith, but not enough to make captious objection impossible.

Just consider the nature of the case. Take, in the first place, the sacred history, in which a diligent ingenuity has laboured to find things contradictory to our moral sense, as, for instance, in the much abused instance of the destruction of the Canaanitish nations. I do not argue the case here, for it has been done abundantly over and over again. I only take it as an illustration of a general principle. The whole facts of the case are not known to us. Consider the immense lapse of centuries included in the sacred narrative of the Old Testament; consider the moral purposes of the revelation, and the necessity of giving prominence to the gradual development of God's great remedial plan of salvation: then suppose that the history of all this connected series of transactions had been given in full;—what a prodigious history would it not have made! Who could ever have waded through it, or what ordinary mind could have disentangled its spiritual and eternal verities from the mass of facts with which they must have been embedded

and overlaid? In such a case the whole structure of the book must have been changed, and the office which the Bible actually fulfils to mankind would have become impracticable. There is an immense range for thought here. It is enough to repeat that in no case are the whole facts known. In no case, therefore, has conscience the materials for a certain decision against the inspired narrative.

But the case is indefinitely stronger when we pass from the revealed facts to the revealed dogmas. Here we deal not with man, but with God; not with the relations of earth, but with the infinitely complex relations of the government of God over the world. Pause over them for a moment, that we may realise the absolute impossibility of the human intellect ever compassing and measuring them all. Think of God Himself, so different from ourselves, that only through human analogies is it possible to know aught about Him; think of the complicated and varied interests involved in His government of this world of ours—in the creation of man at the first, and in the plan of salvation, as during the period of four thousand years it ripened gradually towards its accomplishment; think of the lapse of time covered by the counsels of God as they reached backward and forward from the eternity before time to the eternity after it. Then with these thoughts contrast the blunders made by the highest human wisdom in the comparatively simple interests of a single nation, or even of a single man; and our

absolute ignorance of the future and its contingencies—an ignorance, shared by the foresight of the wisest politician to an extent far beyond what we commonly realise. Then say what is the capacity of the human mind to measure or unravel, or even understand such a government.

Moreover, let it be remembered that even this is not all. In order to understand God's dealings we must take into account not only His relations towards man, but His relations likewise towards all the other portions of His universe. Such considerations must have their place. The analogy of human things teaches us that the conduct of any given person towards another must depend in part upon the position in which he stands, not to that person only, but towards others. For instance, we speak familiarly of the necessity of punishing crime in order to deter others from committing it; and in certain cases when that strange contagion of crime observable at periods is at work in society, we rightly argue that it is necessary, and just, and wise, and even benevolent to increase the severity of punishment in order to increase the emphasis of the warning. In all such cases the conduct of the magistrate towards the single criminal is justly modified by the consideration of others who are not criminals nor personally concerned in that immediate transaction.

So it must necessarily be with God. His conduct towards man, speaking after a human manner and from human analogies, must be modified by

His relation towards other beings, or at least determined with respect to them. We are judging of a God who does not rule this world alone, but ten thousand worlds, in an universe full of life and intelligence, and resonant with praise. Thus in order to possess the data for judging God, we should need to know the exact position of the unfallen spirits, and in what way it is that they are concerned in the life and death of Christ. Then we need to know all His relations towards the fallen spirits who left their first estate, and are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Lastly, we need to know what other globes are inhabited; what are the nature, position, and interests of the inhabitants, and what their knowledge of the events passing upon this world of ours. What an immense range of information! and yet without it the materials for a judgment are palpably absent.

Now who would say that any human intellect can discover these matters, or would be capable of comprehending them, and grasping them at once in their immense aggregate and all the relations of their parts, even if they were revealed. No human understanding is competent to say how the Governor of such a universe ought to act or ought not to act. The simple issue is here: What human being would be capable of administering such a government for a single hour? Suppose the man possessed of infinite authority and unlimited strength, but just as he is, with his human

faculties and no more, to exercise them. I believe that the wildest dream that ever entered into a madman's brain never compassed so huge an impossibility as this would be.

Yet, if we do not know how such a world ought to be governed in all its parts, we do not know how it ought to be governed in any one of them. And if we do not know this, we have not the facts of the case, and in this ignorance the human conscience, even if it were itself accurate as God, could not form a judgment.

The great Christian dogmas are all of them of this character—that they include considerations necessarily reaching, and positively declared to reach, far beyond this our world. Such, for instance, is the dogma of the punitive justice of God; for the measure meted by absolute truth to the whole of the universe He governs must palpably be equal to all. Such is the dogma of the atonement; for as there is but one only-begotten Son of God revealed to exist, His incarnation, death, resurrection, and session in glory, must reach far beyond us. This is stated to be the case. Angels ministered to Him. Among the denizens of the New Jerusalem are specified an innumerable company of angels and the general Church of the first-born. We are told that into the mysteries of the work of Christ archangels desire to look, and that principalities and powers in heavenly places learn from the Church the manifold wisdom of God. Such is the dogma of a future place of

eternal punishment; for we are expressly told that it was prepared for the devil and his angels. To bring such dogmas to the bar of the human conscience, and pronounce upon their right and wrong in the face of the undeniable inconsistencies, mistakes, and crimes of familiar life, appears to me to be an act worthy of the audacity of an angel, and as clearly condemned by the voice of all human experience as by the language of the inspired Word.

Thus we are enabled to place the conscience and the dogmatic faith side by side, and to adjust their relations to each other. The comparison is not between the claims of revealed Christianity on one side, and the verdict of an universal human conscience on the other. There is no such universal conscience, and the conception of it is but a dream. The contrast only lies, therefore, between the authority of the individual conscience and the claims of revelation. The personal opinion of single men relative to what is right and wrong is pitted against the grand doctrines of the faith, authenticated as they are by a mass of irresistible evidence, as by the signature of God Himself, and ratified by the adoring acceptance of the great majority of mankind. That there is any real conflict between faith and conscience the Church most emphatically denies, and has the best right to deny, unless it can be supposed that her faith during all ages has been only an enormous hypocrisy. The conflict is between the conscience of a small minority of man-

kind and the faith once delivered to the saints. Which of them shall obey ; which be supreme ?

The fact that the consciences of men are not unanimous on the subject of Christian doctrines suffices to give the answer. The dogmas declared by some to shock their moral sense, are regarded by others with adoring praise and admiration. The truth is that conscience, in either case, reflects the influences by which it has been educated. In the one case, it takes counsel of the pride of reason, and of the natural distaste for Divine things, inseparable from a fallen and corrupted nature ; in the other case, it is moulded by the Spirit of God, acting through the revelation of His will. That there are in human nature certain ultimate moral principles, distinguishing between right and wrong, and lying at the foundation of all moral judgments, we may well believe. But the Fall has weakened and darkened them, and they shine as no clear beacon, but as a dim and ambiguous light. The hand of the Spirit of God must trim the lamp, and His breath fan the flame. The authority of conscience is derivative ; and from what fountain shall it be drawn but from the everlasting springs of the Divine truth ? Then alone is the candle of the Lord within man competent to fulfil its great function, when it is set beneath the footstool of God, and derives from Him, the inexhaustible Source of light, wisdom to see and force to govern.

LECTURE VIII

THE OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEF

I COR. XVI. 13

*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men,
be strong.*

THE associations of war and battle breathe in every word of this exhortation. It touches the heart as the spirit-stirring address of a trusted leader touches the hearts of his comrades at some great emergency of the conflict. As the foe gathers in the distance, half hidden behind the brow of the hill or beneath the shadow of the forest, and it remains doubtful for the moment at what quarter the storm will break, his warning voice calls to vigilance, "Watch ye." As the tide of war rolls its threatening masses onwards, and the advancing column of the enemy, grim and ominous as a thunder-cloud, threatens to overwhelm the slender line of defenders, the leader's clear voice is heard in the momentary hush of suspense, exhorting them to steadiness and constancy—

“Stand fast.” As the opposing lines break in the shock of battle confusedly, like the meeting of two angry tides, and warrior contends hand to hand with warrior, the familiar voice still sounds amid the tumult, “Quit you like men.” As beneath the fury of the assault the line of the patriot host shakes and wavers, and the crisis calls for a courage prepared to die, but never to yield, I picture to myself the figure of the dauntless leader as he lifts his banner aloft and shouts, “Be strong.” So graphic is the language that it suggests the scene—a vivid mind-painting of the actual reality, as the battle of the warrior with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, surges to and fro in the issues of the doubtful conflict.

Some such scenes must have been present to the mind of St. Paul when he wrote these words. Yet there was nothing whatever in his position and local circumstances at the time to suggest the illustration. At other times when he employed language of the same character, the associations of the moment naturally furnished the imagery. Thus when he exhorted the Ephesians to put on the whole armour of God, the girdle of truth, and the breast-plate of righteousness, and the sandals of peace, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and to take the sword of the Spirit, he wrote the words in the barrack of the prætorian guards at Rome. The clash of military accoutrements, the sound of arms, the trumpet-call, the pomp of the parade, surrounded him on every side. It was probably from

the same spot, and in the sight of the rugged war-beaten soldiers who guarded him during his second imprisonment, that he exhorted Timothy: "Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." But his Epistles to the Corinthians were written from Ephesus, and a totally different class of associations surrounded him at this half-Greek, half-Oriental metropolis of Asia. The seaport crowded with the trade of the Mediterranean, the inhabitants thronging with song and jest into the amphitheatre, or gathering in the temple, where Diana of the Ephesians was worshipped with semi-barbaric grandeur and the rites of a dark superstition, were the prominent objects here. Neither local association nor historical record can have helped to suggest to the apostle's mind the ideas of war. If, therefore, in writing from this spot he employs military illustrations, it can only have been from their peculiar fitness to express his meaning; because they convey the realities of the Christian calling with a graphic vividness and force nothing else could have supplied.

The structure of the verse, when closely examined, furnishes the interpretation of its language. For it involves two ideas—the moral qualities exercised in the contest, and the object for which the contest is maintained. Men do not fight for nothing. It is not possible to exercise heroic virtues for the sake of exercising them. All moral actions are means directed to an end; they require a definite and intelligible purpose, and derive from

the worthiness of this purpose alike their existence and their dignity. To be watchful for the mere sake of exercising watchfulness, and with no object to preserve; to stand fast without any adequate reason for standing fast, or any definite position on which to stand; to call out the manly virtues of constancy and courage without any occasion for their exercise; to tax strength in order to beat the air, would be to make human nature contemptible, and to destroy the very grounds of virtue and vice. The subjective qualities of vigilance, and fortitude, and manliness, and energy, require occasion, and the occasion must be supplied by an objective something lying beyond and outside of the qualities themselves.

No ingenious manipulation of the words can get rid of this necessity for an object, because it is seated in the constitution of man, and is inseparable from his created dependence. Their meaning cannot be satisfied in the maintenance of given states of mind; for there must be reasons for maintaining them. If we say that the exhortation is directed to the cultivation of the religious affections, we only reach the same conclusion in another way. The dogma, as the root of affection, underlies the moral soil everywhere, and crops up into view. We are to watch, lest through spiritual carelessness we are led away from God; to stand fast, lest violent temptation should hurry us into sin; to be steadfast, lest we weary under temptation; and strong, alike to

do and to bear, lest out of mere infirmity and weariness we leave our life-work undone. But if there be danger of our being led away from God, there must be a God from whom to be led away. If there be a danger of our being hurried into sin, there must be a law to be infringed. If there be a danger of our growing weary under temptation, there must be something which we ought to do, and something which we ought not to do, and an obligation to pursue the one and to avoid the other. If there be danger of our leaving our work undone, there must be a task to be accomplished, and a reason for accomplishing it. Watchfulness without a cause would become unsettled restlessness, fortitude an irrational obstinacy, manliness would degenerate into rugged discourtesy, and strength of energy into a display of force, meaningless and therefore contemptible.

Some positive truths and fixed principles underlie all moral action. But what is positive and fixed is dogmatic. Men are not distinguished from each other by the fact that some of them act on dogmatic truths and others do not. They are only distinguished by the nature of the truths they accept, and the reasons for accepting them. A $\pi\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\omega$ is needed by all alike ; the question is where we shall find it. Some men rest the basis of their positive principles on themselves, and become their own law. Other men dig deeper, and finding that the firmest human principles rest on

nothing stronger than the quicksand, derive their positive principles from revelation, and accept their law from God. Men deceive themselves when they profess to reject dogma. They only substitute a human for a Divine foundation for it.

Thus, in the present text, the quality of faith is involved in the virtues called into exercise. In a Christian point of view, faith is the root of all virtues; for faith is the hand by which we lay hold of God; and like the God on whom we lay hold, its attributes vary with its relations. We call God wise, and holy, and just, and good, and mighty, just as the occasion calls into display one attribute of His indivisible being or another. So faith becomes impersonated in one grace or another, according to the occasions calling for its exercise. In the presence of fraud it becomes vigilance, in the presence of danger fortitude; beneath the pressure of difficulty it is manliness, and in prolonged trial strength and energy. But the life of the grace is the same in every case. Faith is the vital principle; and the whole spiritual life ebbs and flows with its alternations. It is faith that overcometh the world. All things are possible to faith, because all things are possible with God. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you ^a."

This is the quality of faith. But belief cannot

^a Matt. xvii. 20.

exist without something that is believed. This is the object of faith. Faith is not exercised for the sake of itself, but for the sake of what it makes known to us. When this object consists of the truths of revelation, these too are called "the faith," because they rest on the authority of God, and deal with verities lying beyond the sphere of sight. The faith believing and the faith believed are correlative ideas, and never can be far separated from each other. Without the objective reality the subjective quality would be impossible. The two ideas lie embedded together in the language of the text, and neither of them can survive without the other. The quality is constitutionally adapted to the object as the eye is adapted to light, the ear to sound, or the wings of an eagle to the atmosphere through which it soars towards the sun. Faith in both its aspects is secondary, not primary. Revealed truths are not the central orb of religion; they are but its atmosphere, necessary but instrumental. They reflect the sun's rays, but do not produce them. The primal fountain is in Christ. His own grand words describe His own grand mission: "I am the light of the world."

To vindicate the reality and claims of the faith, and to show that it is essentially and necessarily dogmatic, has been the object of these lectures. A brief recapitulation of the argument will show what point I have reached, and enable me to place into immediate contact the object of faith and the quality of faith. From the height of

the truth alone can we adequately appreciate the obligations and the nobility of the duty.

The facts of the case stand thus. The Scriptures assert themselves to contain a revelation from God, communicating such a knowledge of the past, such an explanation of the present, and such promises and directions relative to the future, as are necessary to make us wise unto salvation. The truths contained in this revelation constitute a connected and organised whole, and are described as "the faith." They claim to have a Divine authority by virtue of their Author. Inasmuch as God has given no subsequent revelation, and has declared that He will give none, they admit neither of addition nor of diminution. They are entrusted to the keeping of the Church, and as a result of this trusteeship, are formulated for the purposes of instruction and convenience into Church creeds. This system of faith is necessarily dogmatic because it is authoritative. It does not propound theories for discussion, but offers to mankind terms of salvation for acceptance. Whatever is dogmatic claims to be authoritative. In the full sense of the word there can be no dogma beyond the circle of Divine revelation. But dogma, the expression of Divine authority, is as widely separated from dogmatism, the expression of human arrogance, as the supremacy and omniscience of God are separated from the dependency and fallibility of man.

This is the claim of the Scriptures. It involves

three conditions, all affirmed in the sacred writings, and making up in their combination what I have ventured to call the theory of dogma. It includes the existence of an organised Church, taking its origin from the date of the Christian era, and extending uninterruptedly "unto the end of the world." Synchronising with the Church in its origin and duration is a body of definite doctrines regarding God and man and their mutual relations, like the Divine Master around whose Person they are grouped, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In addition to the Church and the faith, the trusteeship and the trust, the theory includes likewise the trust-deeds in a collection of authoritative and inspired documents, constituting at once the credentials of the Church and the standard of the faith. If the claim of the Scriptures be true, these three conditions of the theory must have had an historical realisation, and must admit of being proved by ordinary historical evidence. In every branch of this question the evidence is equally copious and conclusive.

The Church of Christ does exist, and has existed beyond dispute from the time of Christ to the present moment. Its course may be traced clearly as the current of some great river backwards to the century elapsing between the years of Rome 750 and 850. Whatever different accounts may be given of its origin, no one professes to trace it further into the past, nor calls into question its continuity into the present. During this period

of well-nigh two thousand years the unanimous testimony of all the Church writers affirms the dogmatic character of her faith as a message given to her by God in order that she may communicate it to the world. Enormous changes have been accomplished during the period of her own existence, and the inexhaustible activity of her own mental and religious life has stimulated controversy within her own pale; yet never has she faltered, never hesitated on the Divine character of her commission and the grand responsibilities of her trusteeship. The heroic history of her labours, sufferings, and triumphs is but the natural outgrowth of her Divine institution, Divine commission, and Divine strength,—God her founder, the Word of God her message, and the Spirit of God her strength.

This testimony of the Church is corroborated by the identity of the faith. The Divine deposit is at hand and can be identified. If we take the Nicene Creed as the embodiment of the Church's doctrine, we are carried back at a step towards the third century of the Christian era. When we take into account the history of the Creed, the circumstances of its composition, the controversies producing it, and the Œcumenical Council by which it was promulgated, the evidence is thrown from the beginning of the fourth century far backwards towards the first. A line of independent witnesses carry the genealogy of the doctrine into the circle of the apostolic days. The

dogmas of the Christian religion neither find their birth-time in the sixteenth century, as some have ventured to affirm, nor in the mediæval ages, nor yet in the time of Constantine, but in the personal ministries of our blessed Lord and His immediate apostles.

Here the third condition closes up and completes the theory. The authoritative documents constituting the credentials of the Church and the standard of the dogma survive still in the sacred Scriptures. The desultory efforts made here and there to impugn their authenticity and credibility rather illustrate the consilient testimony in their favour than justify a doubt either as to their date or their authorship. The evidences ramify so widely that to tear them up involves the disturbance of the whole ground of all historical certitude. For instance, if it be asserted that the Gospel of St. John was not written till the second century, it remains to be explained how three of the Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, and Ignatius, can have quoted the book before it was written. That the dogmas of the Christian faith are taught in the inspired Word, is a fact entering into the common text-books of this University. On this ground of their inspired authority alone does the Church of England teach them, because they may be proved "by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

This is the affirmative side of the facts: It presents us with a dogmatic faith, changeless, apo-

stolical, Divine. Here we are content to rest. We hold as the ground of our own hope, and preach as the only ground of hope for others, the faith which the glorious company of the apostles, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs, and the holy Church throughout all the world, have held and preached from the beginning.

But from the same storehouse of facts we draw alike the vindication of the truth and the refutation of its opposite errors. Are we told that Christianity has lived and triumphed, not by virtue of its definite faith, but in spite of it, and only because it has embodied and expressed the natural sentiment of religion found to exist universally among mankind? We point to the facts of the case in reply. They show that religion never has existed, and never can exist, without a creed. The experiment was actually made in the sceptical philosophy of the ancients; and when dogmatic teaching died, religion died, and morality perished with it. The knowledge of positive religious truth, religion and virtue, were all buried in the same yawning grave of pagan demoralisation and misery.

Are we told that Christianity may be swept away, and the natural insight of the human soul into Divine things can replace its teaching with a purer, fairer, and nobler creed? Again I point to the facts in answer. What the soul's intuitive powers have done is the only conceivable test of what they are competent to do. Yet there is not

to be found one solitary truth accepted as truth by any portion whatever of civilised mankind, which is not contained within the circle of revealed doctrine, and which does not derive from revelation its authority, if not its very existence.

Are we told that Christian doctrines are only the formulas of human theology; and since they have the same technical form and origin, have the same authority, and no more, as any other product of human speculation? I appeal to the facts in proof that the premiss is wrong, and, therefore, that the conclusion is wrong. The system of faith differs diametrically from the system of speculation in its objects, its methods, and its instruments. Speculation is but the product of the human intellect, reasoning from assumptions created by itself, and disavowing any other means of information than are supplied by its own self-contained and autocratic powers. The doctrines of the faith are generalisations from the inspired Word of God, and possess all the authority belonging to the Word. If the Word be of God, they are also of God. The human form of expression does not change the Divine realities. Totally different in character, they have been totally different likewise in the course of their history. Speculation, ever since men began to think, has produced a succession of efforts and a succession of failures. Gleams of Divine truth have been caught from time to time, either to be frittered away in logical refinement, or evaporated into sceptical uncertainty. Side by side with the

undecaying youth and vitality of Christian doctrine stands the latest development of speculative thought, proclaiming in the Positivism of Comte the extent and absoluteness of its own ignorance, and regarding it as the loftiest of discoveries.

No sooner is this door of objection closed than another is opened. In claiming for Christianity the glory of the past since the Christian era, and regarding it as the spring of our marvellous progress, intellectual, moral, social, and political, we are ascribing to religion, so we are told, what is properly due to other causes. The softening of men's manners, the growth of their social life, the advancement of political liberty, a free spirit of enquiry, and an energetic enterprise, and not least of all the progress of toleration, are asserted to be due to civilisation, not to Christianity. Dogmatic religion is so far from having accomplished these results, that but for its hindrances they would have been far greater and higher. Such is the plea. Again I turn to the facts, and I find that what we call human civilisation has not culminated by an unbroken progress from the beginning, but has been divided into two great periods. Ancient civilisation was already *in articulo mortis*, perishing by the weight of its own intolerable evils, when Christian civilisation arose. The grand distinction in the character of the two is to be found in the moral elements absent in the one and predominant in the other. These characteristic elements, sharp and crisp in the contrast of the sceptical and

dogmatic periods, are every one of them traceable to Scriptural doctrines, out of which they have grown, and with which they stand or fall. Now the difference in the results of the two civilisations must be explained, not by their points of resemblance, but their points of discrepancy. The characteristic results follow the characteristic principles, and these principles, in the case of the latter civilisation, are the dogmas of the Christian faith.

But the effort to find a rival to Christianity failing, a last desperate attempt is made to enthrone a master over it. Conscience is declared to be the absolute judge and arbiter of truth, and its verdict in the rejection of dogma to be among the most conspicuous triumphs of rationalism. Once more I make appeal to the facts of the past. A review of the history of human thought on the subject of the conscience is fatal to the claim. So far is conscience from being accepted as the supreme faculty of man, that while free thought exalts it on one side it calls into question its very existence upon the other. Where its existence is recognised, its supremacy, as the ultimate tribunal from which there is no appeal, is refuted. For conscience, in the latest conclusions of philosophy, is not one faculty but many, not innate but acquired, not primary but subordinate, not the formative and originative monarch of the soul but the product of many causes, and educated by a thousand influences. The claim for conscience to be the judge and arbiter of faith contradicts this philosophy. It transfers it out of

its proper sphere of influence into a new sphere in which it is totally incompetent to pass. It asserts for it an infallibility and accuracy contradicted by the universal testimony of human experience, and, lastly, it extends the supposed infallibility of the moral sense into such an omniscient acquaintance with facts as belongs to God alone. In short, so far is conscience from being able to judge of truth, that truth is the grand educator of conscience.

The difficulties thrown by modern thought around the dogmatic faith are thus dissipated by the steady light of historical facts. They roll away as the mists of some mountain-land roll away before the rising sun. The hand of human strength would not more vainly endeavour to tear the sun out of the skies, than human argument endeavours to destroy the facts of the past or to silence their irrefragable testimony to the perpetuity, antiquity, and apostolicity of the Christian faith.

The body of doctrine described by this name is distinct from the quality of faith, but it is not separable from it. The one is the objective work of the Holy Ghost ; the other His subjective work. In the one, the Spirit provides the material for faith ; in the other, He bestows its living power and energy. The one is the outward structure, the other the indwelling life. The body is not the life, but it is in the organised body that the Spirit lives, and through it the Spirit acts. The outward doctrines are not the soul's inner act :

yet that Divine faculty by which the soul takes hold of Deity, and comes into actual immediate contact with things unseen, cannot act without the doctrines. Faith can no more live and work in this imperfect state of ours, without objective truths to throw light into the intellect and supply food for the affections, than a spirit can live and work without the instrument of the body. In another world it may be different. Amid the fruitions of heaven and the full blaze of the beatific vision of God, the glorified spirit of the saint may unite itself by immediate contact with the Deity, just as in the world of the Unseen disembodied spirits live a life, doubtless of intense activity and measureless capacity for enjoyment or for suffering, apart from the body as it moulders meanwhile in the grave. But in our present state body and spirit are constitutionally associated, and it is but the dream of the fanatic to think of separating them. In the same way belief can only live on what is believed. Conviction, affection, emotion, dissociated from definite points of belief, become evaporated into ghostly names, and merge into mystical fanaticism or sceptical indefiniteness. The work of the Spirit within the soul is consistent with His work outside it. God works harmoniously, and does not dislocate His own actings into disorderly fragments. His laws, if not invariable, are yet, in their ordinary results, equable and consistent. If it be true that the inspiration of the Holy Ghost has furnished us with the doctrine, is it not consistent to believe

that He works through the doctrine He has Himself inspired? If the Spirit bestows the belief, is it not consistent that He should bestow the object of belief? The conclusions of our reason are congruous with the positive declarations of the Word: "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; . . . but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will^b." Both parts of the one complete work come from the same hand, and bear upon them the same seal and signature of God the Holy Ghost.

Suppose the work to be complete in a man's soul. The inward life with its inseparable experiences is strong and vivid. Above and beyond the material objects of sense, his inward eye perceives another world, as real, as actual, as true to his perceptions as the world seen, and as infinitely more important as things eternal are more important than things temporal. Amid the ebbing and flowing life of his fellow-men, he is ever conscious of the presence of another Being; great indeed, and awful, but not more great than admirable, not more awful than beautiful—a Being with a threefold Personality, combining the glories of Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier in the indivisible essence of the One God. With this Being he holds daily intercourse. The human spirit meets with the Divine in the subtle sensibilities of a renewed nature, and the Divine

^b 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 11.

Spirit meets with the human in the operations of the Holy Ghost.

The Divine life within the man in no degree disqualifies him for the work of his temporal life, or renders him indifferent to its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, its pleasures and its interests. Never has there been a greater mistake than any such supposition. The whole history of the saints of God refutes the error. If indeed faith were but a sentiment, and piety but the conscious outgoings of the soul itself reaching after a higher state, then they would be unreal, and because unreal, practically inoperative. There would be this plain reason for it, that the impression of Divine things, having no objective historical basis, directly it came into contact with life's practical objects, would come into contact with things more real than itself, and would therefore yield beneath the pressure of active perception and sensation. But the effect is different when belief feeds on objects definite and historical, capable of being proved by evidence, and in the narrative of the life, sufferings, and death of Christ possessing a foothold on the actual world of sense. For now what a man believes becomes as definite, as sure, as real, as what a man sees and touches; and the comparative defect in the vividness of faith, compared to the vividness of sight, is compensated for by the higher sublimity and incomparable grandeur of the objects. Suppose the man, therefore, with this intense inward life fed by the definite doctrines

of the dogmatic faith, and deriving tenderness and strength from mental contact with them,—would not the faith within be the experimental seal placed upon the reality of the faith without? Would not the inspired language describe the spontaneous sentiment of his heart amid the controversies of an age of disputation: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

Certainly the frame of mind inculcated in the apostolic words stands in strong contrast with the timid pusillanimity too frequently characteristic of modern Christians. The vigilance, courage, fortitude, and energy of the soldier indicate a very different mental condition. It appears to be thought wise and just to be confident in everything except in our religion; to be definite and exact in everything except what touches the soul, and God, and eternity; to hold firm everything except the faith, and trust every one except God. Faintness has touched the heart of the Church; her palsied hand can scarcely grasp her weapons, and her tongue, instead of ringing out her battle-cry clear and sharp as the voices of the saints of old, has learned to speak stammeringly and hesitatingly the truths by which apostles triumphed and for which martyrs died. There is danger of her turning craven in the maturity of her strength. . What is worst of all, this doubting and coward spirit is proclaimed to be philosophical and Christian, and the only becoming temper to be cultivated. This alone is praised as a lofty superiority to prejudice.

If any man dares to hold that truth has not become falsehood, and that scepticism is not faith, nor ignorance wisdom, such a man is behind his times, and the age will condescend to ridicule his abilities and look down with contempt upon his ignorance. Be it so. This is not the time when a man can stand diffidently on one side, and excuse himself by pleas of weakness for treacherous compliance with the sins of his day. The meanest man in the Church of England, who loves his Lord and his Church, has a right to speak and fling back at the world within the Church the unworthy weapons of its warfare.

The temper inculcated by the apostle is not to be confounded with a blind adherence to a traditional faith. Ignorant obstinacy may close its eyes, but faith walks circumspectly, and watches and analyses with holy vigilance every movement of the great controversy, as the restless sea heaves and tosses beneath the ark. To maintain this distinction clearly we need to draw another line between the enquirer and the believer. Let me briefly examine the position of the two in this exact relation.

The position of an enquirer cannot be a permanent and final state. It is no more than a process of transition from one mental condition into another. Human nature cannot continue without a belief, even though its belief should be the abnegation of belief, and its dogma the denial of all dogma. Conclusions of some kind are a necessity to the

human mind. To live without them would be to live in a frightful dream; in a condition of giddy bewilderment, destructive equally of thought and action. Such a state cannot possibly continue, and in point of fact never does continue. Religion consists of certain positive claims on faith and practice. Not to yield to these claims is to reject them. Rejection amounts to an assertion of independence and a denial of any authority of God over us antecedently to revelation, by virtue of creation, preservation, and moral government. God has a right to speak and to be heard. This right may be equally rejected by formal denial and by practical indifference. In the one case, the claim is admitted to be worthy of consideration and to call for a decision; in the other case, it is treated with contemptuous neglect. In this latter case, rejection is just as positive and much more insulting. The act is recognised in this character in the inspired language of Scripture: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh^c."

A man on such a condition necessarily adopts one of two alternatives. He may not think it worth his while to settle his doubts relative to Divine truth, but may deliberately postpone this great question to the pressing claims of his out-

^c Prov. i. 24.

ward and temporal being. In this case he does come to a decision, but it is the decision of the secularist. Or, allowing the question to remain before his mind, he yet keeps it open and allows himself to regard it as one which he either need not or cannot determine. He accepts doubt as the chronic condition of his mind. Such a condition is demoralising to every moral principle in the highest possible degree. It is as much a plain duty of our common manhood to use the faculties bestowed upon us for the discovery of truth as to make a right use of any other of our faculties. In this case also the man does come to a decision, but it is the decision of the sceptic.

The state of an enquirer is therefore a transition state, and neither is nor can be a final condition. The necessities of our mental and moral constitution render it impossible for any man to rest on doubt. The outward facts of our condition, and the moral wants of the soul itself, lead to the same conclusion. For during this state of hesitating indecision the course of life is passing on all the same. Existence does not stand still nor time check his ever-rolling wheels while we make up our minds how we shall use them. The progression of our bodily life brings with it its natural associations of earthly affections, interests, and pursuits. Health and sickness, joy and sorrow, success and failure, make up the chequered whole of our life, and as they pass over the firmament of our mortal existence they throw their shadows over the soul itself.

No human strength is so firmly poised in the force of its own will but that these outward changes agitate it more or less, as the heaving of a distant storm may set a slumbering sea into motion to the furthest bound of each petty creek and bay. They awaken into life the soul's slumbering sensibilities. They exercise conscience alike by the memories of the past and the instinctive hopes and fears of the future. As life passes on; as its interests thicken; as the decreasing buoyancy of the heart leaves each emotion to indurate into a chronic sorrow; as we separate from those we love, and death comes nearer and nearer to ourselves, flinging its long foreshadows over our life,—the task of hardening our nature into apathy, and laying to sleep its inward agitation, becomes more and more difficult. The dread realities of life and death sooner or later break through the feeble barrier, and bring, whether we will or not, the great question to its crisis. Life presents no more pitiable picture of human ignorance and weakness than a thinking, conscious, intelligent, immortal being standing amid such stern facts, and either too frivolous to think about them, or too wilfully ignorant to solve them.

I repeat, therefore, that the condition of an enquirer cannot be the permanent condition of any man, but can only represent a transition from one mental and moral state into another. If any mind be exercised by doubts in this greatest of all great subjects, it is its duty to face those doubts, and resolutely to solve them. The fullest, freest, widest

enquiry is the only path of safety. An honest mind, resolute to do its duty to itself in laying the foundations of its own belief, and yet, at the same time, modestly conscious of its own weakness, and therefore willing and anxious to be taught, represents a very different state from that sceptical frivolity which substitutes a sneer for an argument, which is too indifferent to take the trouble to enquire, and too blindly self-satisfied to be either willing or able to learn. No one who knows the world, and is accustomed to meet with men, can deny that an enormous amount of such scepticism exists, and is often dignified by the name of philosophical impartiality. It is in fact unbelief in its meanest and most unworthy shape. The honest enquirer, whatever may be the issue of his enquiry, is in any case worthy of honour and respect. But the work of deciding upon a faith, whether it be the faith of the secularist, or of the sceptic, or of the Christian, must be seriously undertaken. In face of the momentous gravity of the issue it should be made a life work, to be done, not hastily and frivolously, but deliberately and seriously. The necessity of a decision should be met by a solemn conference between the soul and God, and in the immediate sight of the other world.

Upon the mind of any such enquirer one rule must be earnestly pressed. The question between a dogmatic Christianity, with its majestic claims and magnificent promises, and a rationalism confident of its own self-sufficiency, does not run

upon a single line. No one argument, nor any one single source of proof, can be sufficient in such a court and in such a controversy. The temptation to pursue one line of enquiry alone, and to rest satisfied on that single issue, may probably be great. The mental indecision rendering enquiry necessary is probably the result of an experienced difficulty. Some one argument has disturbed the previous balance and repose of faith. The mind in such a condition will naturally be disposed to follow out this line of argument to the end, without remembering the necessity of testing its conclusion by other and collateral lines. Its influence in unsettling the mind has already invested it with a certain amount of authority. It will carry the prestige of a first success with it. The effect is much the same in the contact of a mind with an argument, as in the contact of one mind with another mind. There is a collision between the two. The one which succeeds in asserting even a momentary superiority, such as is involved in the creation of a state of doubt, naturally takes the precedence; it becomes the master, and the other the pupil. The pupil having once submitted himself to the master's hand is disposed to surrender himself to his sole guidance. Once let this conclusion be formed, and even pride itself, for the moment offended, compensates itself for the wound inflicted on its self-love, by tenaciously following its new guide, and obstinately refusing to admit any doubt of its conclusions.

Now, if the question at issue depended upon the settlement of any one single question, this mode of procedure might be vindicated. But the edifice of Christianity does not rest on a single pillar, but on many ; and were it to be admitted that one here and there had failed us, the rest would still support in its integrity and strength the glorious superstructure. Not one has failed. Not a line of argument ever advanced in the long history of this controversy has been given up as untenable ; not one position has been surrendered. New ones have been added, but the old ones remain where they were. Nevertheless, it is not on any one single evidence that the faith rests, but on many evidences. It is built upon them all in combination. At least eight totally distinct lines of evidence converge in a common conclusion, and a new one is supplied by the very convergence [1]. The consilience of proof is marvellous, and stands alone and unparalleled in the entire history of human controversy.

To argue from any one is consequently as unjust and unreasonable as it would be for a man to split the surface of a single stone in the strong foundations of some human edifice, and then to boast that he had destroyed the entire structure.

The modern tendency to reduce history to a philosophy, and to find in the ever-fluctuating elements of human action the materials for a science, increases the temptation to isolate one line of argument from all the rest, and to decide the entire

question upon it [2]. We map out the mental history of the past, divide it into epochs, and assign to each its peculiar characteristics. We are thus tempted to recognise in the fluctuations of human thought the action of an invariable law, and to dismiss the modes of thinking characteristic of a past epoch, as if they were necessarily obsolete, and we in the nineteenth century had no more to do with them than we have to do with the manners or the social habits of the past [3].

Such a conclusion is totally unphilosophical. Let the rule be applied to science, for instance, and its fallacy will become apparent. Are we to dismiss from our scientific catalogue in the nineteenth century every scientific conclusion arrived at in the seventeenth century? Whatever was true then is true now, and their scientific knowledge is but the basis of our own. It will be replied that we have discarded certain theories of the past in the sphere of science because a more accurate knowledge has proved them to be untrue. Certainly we have, and when modern thought has proved any of the old evidences adduced in support of Christianity to be untrue, we will discard them by all means in the same manner. But among the substantial proofs of Christian apologetics in the past, I ask which have been disproved? Let them be specified and flung away. I reply that not one has been disproved, nor has any serious effort been made to disprove them. They are often treated with affected contempt, but disproof of them there

is none. They have many of them received great accumulations of detail, and have been marvellously strengthened; as for instance, by the geographical and other explorations of Palestine, and by the antiquities of Mesopotamia. But there is not one substantial evidence destroyed. They stand, not like the giant columns of Luxor and Karnak, or the exquisite fragments of Baalbec and Palmyra, mere records of a past magnificence, themselves slowly mouldering into ruin; but they stand like the everlasting hills, jointed into the framework of the solid globe, and looking down upon the perishing generations of mankind, themselves imperishable while the world lasts.

The history of the Evidential School, as it has been called, of the seventeenth century illustrates the justice of this plea. That the labours of the Christian apologists of that day were triumphantly successful is admitted. Beneath the blaze of their overwhelming arguments, the Deism of the time actually died away and became extinct[4]. Thought in our own day has directed its attack upon Christianity from a totally different quarter, and therefore has been answered by totally different arguments. But because the facts alleged in proof of Christianity two centuries since have become inapplicable to the objections of our own day, have they therefore ceased to be facts, or become less significant and conclusive in their proper sphere than they were? Because it suits the humour of modern thought to regard the external evidences

with cool indifference, and to ignore them as completely as if they had never existed, are they therefore evidences no longer, or do they cease to be a part of that enormous aggregate of fact which stares the theoretic sceptic full in the face, and must be explained before he can justly claim to have shaken a solitary stone in the deep foundations of the faith? The Christian may glory in the multitudinous defences of the truth, as the Psalmist gloried in his glowing language over the situation of the earthly Jerusalem: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide unto death^d."

This survey of the whole field of evidence is the more necessary because it furnishes the only possible safeguard against prejudice. The claim often asserted that an enquirer into truth should put away every conviction of the past, every impression produced by habit, education, or experience, amounts really to the claim that he should put away one class of prejudices in order to take up another. To take out of the mind all active impressions is simply impossible. The very demand implies a foregone conclusion that Christianity is not true; and a foregone conclusion as much warps the mind in one direction as in another. A man can no more disencumber himself at will of all

^d Ps. xlviii. 15.

mental impressions than he can disencumber himself of his personal identity. The mind once accustomed to think cannot become a *tabula rasa*. Nor, could we suppose the thinking powers never to have acted, would it be possible even then to put away those primary conceptions which are intuitive and cannot be denied without an outrage upon our nature. Are we, therefore, not to cultivate impartiality? Certainly we should cultivate it. But it can only be attained by opening the mind to conviction from every quarter equally, and admitting every available light into the open avenues of the soul. To pick up one favourite line of argument, and then arbitrarily to reject and contemptuously disavow all the rest, is to accept prejudice and throne it as a tyrannical despot over the heart and conscience.

Another very necessary caution follows from this conclusion. Men are loudly told not to be afraid of the consequences of enquiry, but boldly and unflinchingly to follow it out to the utmost, to whatever conclusions it may lead them. In one sense the canon is true; in another sense most untrue. If it means that truth is to be the simple object of our search, and that it is to be pursued with undivided loyalty of heart, then it is true. Every party to this controversy must learn to discard hard words, and give to each other credit for a sincere pursuit of truth. But if it be meant that any one separate line of argument is to be pursued to its conclusions, and no other considerations are to be taken into account, then it is not true. We

all desire the truth, but we must not rashly assume the conclusion formed on an isolated argument to be the truth. Such is ever the weakness of the human intellect, that it needs to test and correct its conclusions by every possible experiment.

It is in this last and untrue sense that the advice is ordinarily given. The circumstances supposed are something like the following. An enquirer pursues a course of investigation which shakes his faith in the Divine character of Christianity. One by one his old convictions, dear to him as life, are loosed from their hold in the soul, and disappear in the black gulf of unbelief yawning beneath his feet. As his logical process proceeds, and he, unconscious of the first vice inherent in its very premisses, perceives one truth to leave him after another, one star after another to be darkened in the moral firmament, he seems to stand alone in a world without a God, and is filled with horror unutterable and the weight of an infinite desolation at the dreadful prospect. He is bidden to be indifferent to these feelings, to regard them as sheer weaknesses, the remains of obsolete prejudices, not to be surrendered without a struggle. In such a case, I protest that the rule is not true, but is a pregnant and palpable fallacy. I fully admit that, if truth demands it, even this sacrifice must be made; but I deny that what demands such a sacrifice can be true.

These emotions of the soul are no prejudices of education, but a vital part of our moral selves.

It is possible to educate ourselves out of them, just as it would be possible for a man to destroy his own sight, or to paralyse his own limbs; but it can only be done by crushing part of the soul's constitution, and reducing its moral life into the silence and torpor of the grave. The agonies experienced in the prospect of reducing this comely world into an infidel chaos arise from the universal wants of the human soul. To crush them out of life is to do outrage to our own nature. From the revulsion of so great an outrage, many who have cut away the moorings of their souls from a Christianity founded on historical evidence, have found refuge from the terror of despair in the absolutism of Church authority. The truth cannot require us to place one part of the human soul into conflict with another, and prostrate the bleeding heart, and the tortured conscience, and the desolated affections beneath the heels of a cold and heartless speculation.

Enquiry is the duty of a soul tormented by doubt. But let the enquiry be solemn, honest, earnest; let it be truthful and fair; let it be full and free, and I no more doubt that it will issue in a firm and reasonable faith than I have doubt of the existence of the sun in yonder heavens.

But we cannot be enquirers for ever. We have voluntarily become members of a Christian society. This Church teaches a dogmatic faith; not because she would bind any man's freedom of conscience by the despotism of ecclesiastical authority, but

because she has inherited a certain trust, and is resolute faithfully to discharge it. To her, in this period of the world, and in this portion of Christendom, has been committed the faith once delivered to the saints, and she cannot prove untrue to the great trusteeship without destroying her own life. She has a definite message to deliver, and whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, she must deliver it. She is the inheritor of the faith of saints and martyrs, apostles and prophets, and she walks in their footsteps. The mantle of the grand past of the Church of Christ has descended upon her shoulders; and her articles, jealously moulded upon Scripture; her formularies, steeped in the spirit of dogmatic faith, and penetrated throughout with dogmatic reference, show with how large a portion of the spirit of the ancient saints she holds forth "the Word of Life." It is no more possible, consistently with an honest interpretation, to take the dogmatic teaching out of the documents it pervades everywhere, than it is possible to take the colour out of the skies, or strip their thousand hues of beauty from the petals of the flower or the plumage of the bird. When we became members of this Church, we professed ourselves to be enquirers no longer, but believers. We accepted service with the historical Christ, the living centre of the historical faith. We were enlisted beneath His banner at the baptismal font, and were signed with the sign of the Cross "in token that hereafter we should not be ashamed

to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end."

No dexterity can ever succeed in reconciling such an obligation with the position of a disciple of modern thought. For if there be no divinely-given dogma, there is no faith to maintain. Then Christ was not crucified for us; then sin is but a variable and arbitrary thing; then there is no "world" amid the blaze of a national Christianity; then the devil is but an ignorant fiction of the past; then we cannot be soldiers, if there be no definite faith to keep, nor servants if there be no authoritative law to obey. The man who, either by adult baptism or by the rite of confirmation, has accepted membership in the Church of England, has passed onward from enquiry into belief, and can no more reconcile the mental conditions belonging to the two states than he can blend the immaturity of the boy with the maturity of the man.

Yet more cogently does the obligation lie upon all who have accepted Orders within the ministry of the Church of England. The position of enquiry is inconsistent with the first conditions of the office. A teacher must know what he teaches; and when the teaching is moral and experimental, must hold as the guide and comfort of his own soul what he stands forward to proclaim to be the guide and comfort of other men's souls. Who can

ever forget to the last day of life the solemn question put to him at his ordination: "Wilt thou be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word;" or, while memory continues, lose the recollection of the charge: "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the congregation."

An enquirer after truth cannot be a teacher of truth. He may teach, no doubt, others less advanced than himself, but it will be the teaching of his own struggles and difficulties. An honest and truthful mind must reflect itself in all its outgoings. The language must be the mirror of the man. What is in the heart must, consistently with self-respect and the love of truth, find its utterance in the mode of thinking, feeling, and speaking. A teacher should be a believer, not an enquirer; and a teacher in the ministry of a dogmatic Church should be a believer in a dogmatic faith. He dare not teach what he does not assuredly believe, lest he should either convert a lie into the truth of God, or turn the truth of God into a lie.

Why then should the lips of a Christian teacher be more timid and hesitating than the lips of other teachers? Masters in the school of doubt, or of unbelief, speak ever firmly and confidently enough; why should the tongue of the Church alone stammer in her message, or her heart distrust the honesty of her own enquiry and the strength of her own convictions. If the state of an enquirer

has its own appropriate mental condition, so also has the state of a believer. Doubt belongs to the one, but a firm and reasonable conviction to the other. The hesitancy of childhood must ripen into the firm and strong maturity of the man. No dim vagueness of impression, no feeble uncertainty of conviction, no faltering grasp of truth, no coward's timidity in maintaining and confessing it, become those who are inheritors of the faith of prophets and apostles. The hero's strength and the martyr's constancy are no less taxed in the sphere of belief than of practice. God Himself appeals to them: "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine^d," but "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

Such a frame of mind is not to be confounded with a blind obstinacy, shutting its eyes to the controversies of the day, and disdainfully indifferent to the progress of thought and the results of investigation. Teachableness of mind befits the Christian to the last hour of life. No thinking man can spend a day without learning. In the sphere of doctrine itself human mistakes and misconceptions become largely blended up with the eternal realities of Divine knowledge, and it is the anxious work of a lifetime to separate them. The acquisition of a fixed standpoint for faith enables a man the better to think, to read, to enquire, to make himself acquainted with other

^d Eph. iv. 14.

men's thoughts and enquiries, because in the repose of a settled conviction his mind has acquired a mental leverage to work from. But if a blind acquiescence in a traditional belief stands at one extreme of the mental scale, a cowardly distrust of truth and an unsettled restless scepticism stands at the other. Between the two lives and works the mature faith of the Christian, equally removed from narrow bigotry and from cowardly compromise, intelligent and enquiring on one side, firmly poised and courageous upon the other, modest and teachable because conscious of the weaknesses of man, strong and resolute because confident in the wisdom and infallibility of God.

Against such a faith the mere foam and froth of controversy will beat innocuously as the waves against the immoveable rock. The idle arrogancies of confident assertion and reckless assumption will pass over a mind settled upon this rock harmlessly as the wind. Charges of ignorance and narrowness and bigotry it will put on one side as such palpable violations of the first courtesies of all controversy as to make the wielders of such weapons unworthy of attention. Its clear, steady eye will pierce at once through those loose generalisations from facts imperfectly known, and guesses elevated into the dignity of conclusions, which sceptical science itself has found it necessary to disavow, and which threaten to make geology a byword and a reproach. From its calm height faith looks down on the rolling mists and troubled waves below,—its foot upon

the rock, its eye upon the Cross, its hand upon God.

To a believer thus established in an intelligent conviction, a timid pusillanimity in the maintenance of Divine truth is a fourfold treachery. It is treachery to himself, because it involves distrust in the honesty of his own investigation and the accuracy of his own deliberate conclusions. It is treachery to his Church, because his unfaithfulness to her principles weakens her arm in the day of conflict, and lowers the shout of her battle-cry into the panic-stricken accents of the coward. It is treachery to Christ; for the Cross is the condition of our calling, and he who deserts the banner in the hour of danger proves himself unworthy of his Master. It is treachery to God; for it distrusts His revelation of the truth, as if He had not revealed to us all we need to know, or had failed to make the revelation clear. Honesty to ourselves, faithfulness to our Church, allegiance to our glorified Master, and confidence in God, should teach us watchfulness in guarding the faith, constancy in defending it, manliness in holding it, and strength to live, or, if God will, to die in defence of it.

Such a courage must, however, have its origin in an influence higher and greater than itself. No merely intellectual apprehension of a creed, no perception of its internal unity and coherence, no cold survey of evidence however conclusive, no reluctant acceptance of the force of outward facts can kindle

so lofty an enthusiasm. This recognition and confession of a dogmatic creed is good, but it can only supply the food of faith, and cannot breathe into faith itself that Divine unction and strength whereby it soars towards the skies. The objective faith is only instrumental, and Christ is its true end and object. The personal contact of the soul with its Saviour, as it is brought into vital union with Him, and derives out of His fulness grace for grace, is the alone true spring of life, and God the Holy Ghost is the efficient Agent of it. Then the soul has the inward witness in itself. The sense of forgiveness through the blood of the Covenant, the joy of the Divine life, as fresh from the heart of God Himself it comes thrilling into the soul with emotions strangely new and unutterably sweet, the calm confidence of the heart in the love of a Father in heaven, its sensible consciousness of His presence, the joy of intercourse with Him in prayer and praise at an open throne of grace where God and the soul meet together, constitute experimental proofs of the Divine authority of the dogmatic faith exceeding all others. We no longer believe, but we know. The living spirit works through them upon the living soul, and a man may as soon doubt his own existence as doubt the reality of an inward consciousness higher than nature and stronger than death.

This experience is no variable sensation; not one of those ephemeral feelings that play over the human soul, like the lights and shadows of

a summer day upon the surface of sea and land. The definite promises of the Word constitute the objective standard of the sensation. If the dogmas of human depravity, and of the operations of the sanctifying Spirit upon the soul, be true, this experience cannot be otherwise than it is. A nature unregenerate must ever shrink from God and from His truth out of the mere instinct of its spiritual alienation. However moral and honest and sincere a man may be, the pride of an alienated nature will ever hold itself aloof from God. Truth which is of God can never be cordially embraced without the teaching of the Spirit of God. Nor can the Spirit of Truth work in the soul without leaving its sensible effects on the head, the conscience, and the heart. Thus the Scripture ever refers a saving faith to a saving knowledge: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard^e?" and the effect of the two to the action of an enlightening Spirit: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ^f."

From this fountain have flowed the zeal of prophets, the faith of apostles, and the constancy of martyrs. With this experience Paul preached the Saviour whom once he persecuted. This sustained John in Patmos. This quickened the souls of the primitive martyrs as they were torn by the Roman lions, or set up as living torches to light

^e Rom. x. 14.

^f 2 Cor. iv. 6.

the darkness of the prophetic Babylon. Through this triumphed the long line of the ancient saints, Cyprian, and Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and Athanasius, and Augustine, and others whose names are in the book of life. This nerved the courage of the Reformers, and strengthened Luther at Erfurt, Calvin at Geneva, and Zwingli at Zurich, and supported Latimer and Ridley as they gave their bodies to be burned, and consecrated the soil of Oxford with their martyred ashes. What shall I more say; for the time would fail me to tell of all "who through faith have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong^g." These heroes of the Church have ever built their faith on dogma, and the Spirit of God has cemented, by a personal experience, the sacred foundations. To give up the doctrines of the faith would have been to them more than giving up their life.

This inward, living, personal experience draws the true line between the Church of God and the world. Scripture positively asserts this: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God^h;" "If any man be in Christ he is a new creatureⁱ." The apostolic words do but echo the language of One greater than apostles, and who spoke with the authority of a twofold Deity—the Deity of the Spirit given Him without measure, and

^g Heb. xi. 33.^h Rom. viii. 14.ⁱ 2 Cor. v. 17.

the Deity of His own nature in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily: "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God^k." To this issue God is manifestly leading His Church. The experimental work of God the Holy Ghost upon the human soul constitutes the broad line of demarcation, the gulf fixed and impassable between the two worlds; and on either side of it lie truth and error, belief and unbelief, life and death.

I trust I shall not be thought to transgress the proper bounds of the office committed to me in this place, or to be guilty of immodesty and presumption, if before this venerable University I venture, though it be but for a moment, to merge the argument of the lecturer in the message of the preacher. I have recently looked into the open grave, and have seen the other world too vividly flashing through its slender veil for the impression ever to be forgotten. Brethren, partakers of the holy calling, in this light all things should be regarded; for that other world will be no abrupt transition, no dislocated commencement of a new state, but the consummation and crown of the world that is. The track of glory leading across the waves into the better land must take its beginning on this side Jordan, amid the conflicts and struggles and anxieties of life. We as much need Divine help to enable us to live as we need it to strengthen us to die. For life, not for death, is the Gospel given. The beginning of spiritual life is in its power; the consecration of temporal life is in

^k John iii. 3: γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν.

its blessing ; the inheritance of eternal life is bound up in its promise. Our relation towards Christ is therefore not a question for the future, but a question for the present. To know Him and the power of His resurrection is the true wisdom. The heavenly light flashes upon the soul through the crevices of the broken heart, and the triumphant songs of the saints in heaven can alone be learned in the pathetic contrition and tearful supplication of the saints on earth. The faith alone gives dignity to early manhood, for it supplies a noble purpose to elevate life, and a pure hope to sanctify it. The faith alone is the glory of ripper years, teaching us not to exhaust our spiritual strength in effeminate idleness, but to overcome the evil one, strong in faith, firm in hope, and rejoicing with joy unspeakable amid the very heat and labours of the conflict. This alone is the crown and joy of age, as it ripens for the grave, beautiful as some gorgeous summer sun, more lovely in the pomp and splendour of its setting than in the blaze of its midday strength. He who lives upon this faith, and drinks from this fountain of the Spirit of God, is truly the believer. In the absence of this wisdom all other wisdom is valueless ; for it will give neither strength in life, nor hope in death, nor heaven in the life beyond. Then is our whole history a long mistake ; a comely tree of God's planting, but twisted out of shape and distorted by sin. Then is man himself a contradiction, life a paradox, and death a blank. Then, indeed, have we cause to plead the pathetic Litany

of our Church : "From all blindness of heart, good Lord, deliver us !" But if the believer has learned of Christ, he finds it his highest ambition to walk worthily of Him. In His school, where God the Spirit is the teacher, the loftiest intellect and the maturest wisdom may be honoured in becoming a disciple. Neither will life weaken nor death efface His blessed lessons. They may be commenced in conflict, but they will be carried on in joy, and completed in the beatific vision for ever and ever.

What then, though the battle rages on every side, and without are fightings, and within are fears : shame be to the craven heart that deserts the banner of his crucified Master. The lips that utter the words are the lips of an apostle, but the Spirit dictating them is the Spirit of Christ : "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

NOTES

NOTES

LECTURE I

NOTE 1, p. 7.

IN Jude 3 the word *πίστις* denotes not *fides qua creditur*, but *fides quae creditur*. "It remains, therefore, that the word expresses the truth received; and in this sense the general consent of criticism may be said to accept it." Erasmus paraphrases the apostle's words thus: "Pro fide hoc est pro sanâ doctrinâ ab apostolis acceptâ quae semel sanctis tradita est, nec alio tempore alia atque alia deberi debet, decertare jubemus." Beza translates: "Pro fide quae semel tradita est sanctis," and adds: "pro viribus tueamini fidem, sana scil. doctrina et vitae exemplis." The verdict of the older critics is summed up in "Poli Synopsis Criticorum:" "Fidem hic vocat ipsam doctrinam (Grotius, Beza, Piscator) fidei, videlicet Evangelium (Piscator) per metony. (Grotius, Piscator, Vorstius) ut Acts vi. 7 (Grotius), 1 Tim. iv. 1 et alibi sæpe (Beza)." Wolfius in his "Curæ Philologicae" adopts the paraphrase of Sherlock: "Ut serio teneatis eam, quae vobis tradita est, doctrinam, contra falsos doctores, quos clanculum audio irrepsisse." In this interpretation our English critics unanimously agree. Bloomfield, Alford, Wordsworth, and Webster and Wilkinson adopt it. Schleusner in his Lexicon, among other applications of the word, gives the following: "Objectivé sumitur et ipsam formulam religionis Christianae (quia fidei seu verae in Deum fiduciae praeceptione potissimum continebatur), doctrinam

Evangelicam a Jesu et apostolis traditam fidem quae creditur seu objectivam notat.” Among the list of expositors who adopt this sense may be specified, Hammond, Whitby, Sherlock, and Doddridge, in our own country; and Bengel, De Wette, Stier, Passow, Huther, and others abroad.

NOTE 2, p. 8.

“THREE classes of passages occur. In the one it [*πίστις*] is used with the article in contexts where it can only be understood of the act of faith in the believer. In another class of passages its objective meaning is equally clear; while in a third class of passages the word may bear either meaning.”

The passages where the word occurs in the Acts of the Apostles are so exceedingly numerous (213, with or without the article), that no object would be gained by loading the Notes with an exhaustive classification. I therefore give instances only. The word with the article is used in a subjective meaning in Acts iii. 16; xv. 9; Rom. iii. 30, 31; iv. 11, 14; Eph. iii. 17; Col. ii. 12; and Philem. 4. It is employed with the article in an objective sense in Acts vi. 7; xiii. 8; Gal. i. 23; 1 Tim. iii. 9; v. 8; vi. 21; Titus i. 13. In the following passages it will bear, consistently with the context, either a subjective or an objective meaning, or both, viz. Acts xiv. 22; xv. 9; xvi. 5; xx. 21; xxiv. 24; xxvi. 18; Rom. i. 12; 2 Cor. i. 24; Phil. i. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 18; iii. 8; Titus ii. 2. The transition usage of the word appears also when it is used without the article. Its subjective use without the article needs no illustration. But it is used objectively in Eph. iv. 5, and both objectively and subjectively in 1 Tim. i. 2, 4, 19; ii. 7, 15; and Titus i. 4.

NOTE 3, p. 12.

“*παράδοθελση*: Tradita divinitus.” (Bengel.) “Apud Arist. Phys. 4: *παράδομενον*, a majoribus traditum.” (Scapula.) “*παράδωμι*: trado docendo, doceo, instituo, praecepicio, narro, Mark viii. 13; Luke i. 2; Acts vi. 14; xvi. 4; Rom. vi. 17;

1 Cor. xi. 2, 23; xv. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 2; Jude 3." (*Schleusner*.) "To give or hand over to another, as a torch in the torch-race, Plat. Legg. 776 b; then in various ways, like Latin *tradere*, as a kingdom to one's son, correlative to *παράδεσθαι*, Hor. ii. 159; one's son to a tutor, Hor. i. 73; a prize to a winner, Xen. Oec. xx. 28." (*Liddell and Scott*.) "ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἡμῶν παραδοθέντα λόγον ἐπιστρέψωμεν." (*Polycarp. ad Phil.* c. 7.)

NOTE 4, p. 16.

"THE object for which Christ appeared to St. Paul was not to impart to him a new system of chronology, but to make him a witness to His resurrection, and to enlighten his mind on truths connected with the everlasting well-being of mankind. The supernatural gifts of the Spirit were communicated, not for the purpose of solving dubious points of history, but to open the minds of the apostles to the end and design of the Incarnation; to reveal to them the great truths of the Christian revelation; to bring to the minds of the apostles whatever Christ had said unto them, and to afford a miraculous attestation to the truth of their testimony. What right have we to assume that because St. Paul was put in trust with the Gospel and supernaturally assisted in the discharge of that trust—so that when he treated of Gospel truth his assertions were to be received not as the 'word of man, but of God'—or because when he gave commands for the regulation of the Churches, 'the things which he wrote unto them were the Lord's'; that he was inspired with a supernatural knowledge of chronology or history without the smallest support for such an assumption in one single assertion in the New Testament. His Old Testament chronology might have been that which he had learned in the school of Gamaliel. If he had learned a system of chronology there, there is nothing in his assertions concerning his own inspiration, or in the promises of our Lord, which requires us to believe that the defects of Gamaliel's chronology would be corrected by inspiration." (*The Nature and Extent of Divine Inspiration, by the Rev. C. A. Row, p. 227.*)

NOTE 5, p. 16.

"IT [the modern school of thought] is no longer exclusively negative and destructive, but it is on the contrary intensely positive, and in its moral aspect intensely Christian. It clusters round a system of essentially Christian conceptions—equality, fraternity, the suppression of war, the elevation of the poor, the love of truth, and the diffusion of liberty. It revolves round the ideal of Christianity, and represents its spirit without its dogmatic system and its supernatural narratives. From both of these it unhesitatingly recoils, while deriving all its strength and nourishment from Christian ethics." (*Lecky, History of Rationalism*, vol. i. p. 185.)

"The general bias of the intellect of the age is in the direction of rationalism. In other words, there is a strong predisposition to value the spirit and moral element of Christianity, but to reject dogmatic systems, and more especially miraculous narratives." (*Ibid.* p. 191.)

NOTE 6, p. 16.

"THE moral progress of mankind can never cease to be distinctively and intensely Christian, so long as it consists of a gradual approximation to the character of the Christian Founder. There is indeed nothing more wonderful in the history of the human race than the way in which that ideal has traversed the lapse of ages, acquiring a new strength and beauty with each advance of civilisation, and infusing its benevolent influence into every sphere of thought and action." (*Lecky, History of Rationalism*, vol. i. p. 335.)

"Passages eloquently descriptive of the character of Christ, from Rousseau, Morell, Theodore Parker, and Greg, will be found in the Authors." (*The Bible and its Critics*, the Boyle Lectures for 1861.)

NOTE 7, p. 16.

"WHEN I say that 'the Bible contains God's word,' I do not mean, as some have supposed, that we may pick and choose among the contents of the Bible—that we can separate those books or portions of the Bible which are God's word

from those books and portions which are not. I mean that throughout the Bible the word of God will be heard by the listening ear and the obedient heart, reproving, exhorting, instructing, comforting; but I say that this word is 'the Spirit and the life' which breathes in the written words, not the mere 'flesh' or letter of the words themselves. 'The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' And as we read the sacred text, we can feed by faith upon this bread of life, and feel our strength renewed, and the daily waste supplied of our spiritual substance; while yet our spirits have no power to assimilate the mere human elements, which are of the earth earthy, which must pass away, having no fitness in themselves to sustain the life of our souls." (*Natal Sermons, by the Rt. Rev. John William Colenso, D.D.*, p. 8.)

NOTE 8, p. 18.

"It was the opinion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact, that the doctrines of the Gospel are described in Scripture under this term [δόγματα], and the opinion is shared by many critics of later times."

The state of the case is ably summed up in Professor Eadie's Commentary on the Ephesians:—

"Τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασι. I take this phrase as a graphic description of the ceremonial law. But the meaning and connection of ἐν δόγμασι have been much disputed. It has been regarded as the means by which the law has been abolished, to wit, 'by doctrines'—Christian doctrines or precepts. Such is the reading of the Arabic and Vulgate, the Syriac being doubtful, and such is the view of Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, Aretius, Grotius, Estius, Hammond, Zeger, à Lapide, Bengel, Fritzsche, Olshausen, and Scholz. Winer, in his third edition, proposes this view, but renounced it in his fourth (§§ 31, 32). Thus Chrysostom says, δόγματα γὰρ καλεῖ τὴν πίστιν. Theodoret and Theophylact follow, while Œcumenius vindicates the use of the word as applied to Christ's teaching, by quoting from the Sermon on the Mount such phrases as 'I say unto you;' these being proofs of authoritative dictation and warranting the truth propounded to be called δόγμα. To this theory there are insuperable objections." (p. 163.)

NOTE 9, p. 18.

THE five places where the word δόγμα is used in the New Testament are: Luke ii. 1, ἐξήλθε δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος; Acts xvi. 4, παρεδίδουν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσειν τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, and Acts xvii. 7, οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσουσιν; Eph. ii. 15, τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασι; Col. ii. 14, ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν. In the first three instances the sense of command is indisputably conveyed.

NOTE 10, p. 18.

“HENCE it was that Christians were called sometimes οἱ τοῦ δόγματος, ‘men of the faith’—meaning the faith of Christ. As in the rescript of Aurelian the Emperor, against Paulus Samosatensis, recorded by Eusebius (lib. vii. c. 30.), the bishops of Italy and Rome are styled ἐπίσκοποι τοῦ δόγματος, ‘bishops of the faith,’ that is, the Christian faith.” (*Bingham’s Christian Antiquities*, vol. i. bk. i. s. 9.)

NOTE 11, p. 22.

“AND the grand example of St. Paul, in the mighty conduct which was waged in his day, may be a source of comfort and support to the weakest of us, who in our small measure are called to take part in the great religious movement of our own time. However personally insignificant the combatants in the conflict of the present day, compared with the great Apostle of old, yet the conflict itself is the same—one which, in the lapse of time, is continually reversed again and again. It is, as in his days, the battle of the spirit against the letter, against the exclusiveness and narrowness—the bondage—of the Law. We are told that ‘whatever was written aforetime in the Scriptures, was written for our learning,’ and St. Paul himself had to be taught by his own experience that the disciple was not to be above his Lord; that if they had ‘called the master of the house Beelzebub;’ if, out of a blind zeal for God, they had said of that holy and loving One, ‘He hath a devil, He is mad, He deceiveth the

people,'—they would not spare those of His household. It is an act of humble faith, my brethren, and not of arrogance; it is making that very use of the Bible, which, as Christians, it is our duty and privilege to make of it, if we, in this our day, while doing (as we trust) God's work of any kind, find comfort and support in studying the great examples of the past. The Bible is never so well read and understood, as in the light of experience." (*Natal Sermons*, pp. 5, 6. Sermon V, on the Comfort of the Scriptures.)

"Our duty to God is not now to fear Him, and to love Him, and to walk in His ways, but to hold certain opinions about Him, to maintain the truth of certain old histories about Him. We submit to be sermonised on Sundays, provided our sermons will not interfere with enlightened prudence and political economy on week days. Nay, week after week, we can see 'the cures of human souls' advertised for sale in the columns of our religious newspapers, and no shame burns on our cheeks. Surely, surely if there be any impersonal Spirit of Evil, he may sit by with folded hands, contented to spare interference in a state of things which no help of his can improve." (*Froude's Nemesis of Faith*, Preface, p. 12.)

NOTE 12, p. 30.

"These men [the great discoverers of nature's laws] have been, without exception, believers in dogmatic faith." This statement is necessarily based on the biographies of the illustrious dead, in this department of human labour. Of men still living it would be equally unbecoming, unsafe, and premature to speak. In support of the statement, I quote the great authority of the Historian of the Inductive Sciences:—

"This step so much resembles the mode in which one intelligent being understands and apprehends the conceptions of another, that we cannot be surprised if those persons in whose minds such a process has taken place, have been most ready to acknowledge the existence and operations of a superintending Intelligence, whose ordinances it was their employment to study. When they had just read a sentence of the table of the laws of the universe, they could not doubt whether it had had a legislator. When they had deciphered in them a comprehensive and substantial truth, they could

not believe that the letters had been thrown together by chance; they could not but readily acknowledge, that what their faculties had enabled them to read, must have been written by some higher and profounder mind. And accordingly, we conceive, it will be found on examining the works of those to whom we owe our knowledge of the laws of nature, and especially of the wider and more comprehensive laws, that such persons have been strongly and habitually impressed with the persuasion of a Divine Purpose and Power, which had regulated the events which they had attended to, and ordained the laws which they had detected.

“To those who have pursued science without reaching the rank of discoverers; who have possessed a derivative knowledge of the laws of nature which others had disclosed, and have employed themselves in tracing the consequences of such laws, and systematising the body of truth thus produced, the above description does not apply; and we have not, therefore, in these cases the same ground for anticipating the same frame of mind. If among men of science of this class, the persuasion of a Supreme Intelligence has at some period been less vivid and less universal than in that higher class of which we have before spoken, the fact, so far as it has existed, may perhaps in some degree be accounted for.

“The names of great discoverers are not very numerous. The sciences which we may look upon as having reached, or at least approached their complete and finished form, are Mechanics, Hydrostatics, and Physical Astronomy. Galileo is the father of modern Mechanics. Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton are the great names which mark the progress of Astronomy. Hydrostatics shared in a great measure the fortunes of the related science of Mechanics; Boyle and Pascal were the persons mainly active in developing its more peculiar principles. The other branches of knowledge which belong to Natural Philosophy, as Chemistry and Meteorology, are as yet imperfect, and perhaps infant sciences, and it would be rash to presume to select in them names of equal pre-eminence with those above mentioned. But it may not be difficult to show, with sufficient evidence, that the effect of science upon the authors of science is, in these subjects, as in the former ones, far other than to alienate their minds from religious trains of thought, and a habit of considering the world as the work of God.” (*Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology*, by the Rev. W. Whewell, M.A., London, 1833; bk. iii. c. v. pp. 307–309.)

LECTURE II

NOTE 1, p. 41.

THE mistake commented upon in the lecture forms the all-pervading fallacy of Mr. Lecky's "History of Rationalism in Europe." Neither is any reference made to the dogmatic records of the faith; nor is there any recognition of the place which the Scriptures claim to hold with reference to the Church and to her doctrines, and which the unanimous teaching of the Church herself has ever consistently assigned to them. In vol. i. p. 396, for instance, the Protestant doctrine of Justification and the Romish doctrine of Justification are placed upon precisely the same footing as two forms of speculative belief equally deserving of consideration. Thus the popular belief in witchcraft is confounded with a belief in the existence of a spiritual and unseen world. (Vol. i. ch. i.) All the evils that have sprung for the last two thousand years from the heat of men's passions and tempers in matters of religion are considered to be the natural and necessary product of a dogmatic faith. (Vol. i. ch. iv. p. 1, and vol. ii. ch. iv. p. 2.) The same fallacy pervades the entire reasoning. A reference to the Scriptures would have shown that the Romish doctrine of Justification by Works, the popular superstition which believes in witchcraft and magic, and the natural out-going of men's hot passions in controversy whatever may have been its special subject, are not only foreign to the true genius of Christianity, but opposed to its positive letter. Mr. Lecky's views may probably have remained unchanged in any case, but it was equally desirable for himself and for his readers that in a history of opinion the theory of Christianity should be accurately stated.

NOTE 2, p. 41.

SEE Homily XIV., On the Peril of Idolatry, Part iii.

NOTE 3, p. 55.

THE following list forms a very inadequate attempt to present in one view the unanimous testimony of the Christian writers. In some cases where fragments of works alone remain we find only a phrase or two on which to rest, as in the fragments of Papias, Lucius, and others of the early authors. But in most cases the testimony is singularly full and explicit, and derives great force from the strong diversity of doctrinal sentiment often existing among the writers. Thus we find the same devout belief in an authoritative revelation, and the same assertion that it is to be found within the limits of Holy Scripture, in Abelard and his opponent Roscellinus, in Berengarius and his judge Lanfranc. The reference given to Durandus is an illustration, for the treatise to which the reference is given supports in the most extreme form the corporal presence of our Lord's body and blood in the Eucharistic elements. Yet, however widely the great divines of the Church have differed on separate points of doctrine, no controversial advantage led them to compromise the truth of an authoritative and dogmatic revelation entrusted by God to the keeping of the Church and embodied in Holy Scripture.

I have not quoted any passages in detail beyond those given in the body of the lecture, partly to save space, and partly because detached passages are never wholly satisfactory to a student who desires to ascertain for himself the actual facts of the case. As I have carefully verified every quotation, I trust that no inaccuracies will be found to have crept into the list. I have found great difficulty in selecting one passage in each case from the many marked in my commonplace book, and can only express the hope that any student who takes the trouble to look into the matter will not rest satisfied without making a further examination for himself.

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- 97 Clementis Rom. Epist. i. c. xlii.—Apostolic Fathers. Edinb. 1867.
101 Ignatii, Epist. ad Ephes. s. xvi.—Corpus Ignatian. Lond. 1849.

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- 108 Polycarpi, Epist. ad Philip. s. vii.—Routh's Scrip. Eccl. Opusc.
 117 Hermas, Shepherd of, Simil. viii.—p. 397, tom. iii. Apost. Fathers. Edinb. 1867.
 125 Quadratus, apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. iv. c. iii.—p. 307, tom. xx. Paris 1867.
 130 Barnabas, Epistle of—ch. ix. p. 115, Apost. Fathers, Edinb. 1867.
 130 Papiæ Fragmenta, s. i.—p. 8, Routh's Reliquiae Sacrae.
 140 Justini Mart. Dial. c. Tryph. s. 48.—p. 345, tom. i. Paris 1842.
 164 Luciani Oratio.—p. 5, vol. iv. Routh's Reliquiae Sacrae.
 167 Irenæus adv. Haereses, lib. i. c. x. s. 1.—tom. vii. Paris 1857.
 170 Theophilus Antioch. ad Autolyc. lib. ii. c. 22.—p. 338, vol. iii. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 170 Dionysii Corinth.—p. 181, vol. i. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 170 Melito Sard. Excerpt. ex Novo Test.—p. 46, vol. iv. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 170 Hegesippus de Judae Nepot.—p. 217, vol. i. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 172 Tatiani Oratio c. Graecos, s. xii.—p. 16, tom. ii. Paris 1842.
 180 Athenagorae Legat. pro Christ. s. vii.—p. 903, tom. vi. Paris 1857.
 188 Asterius Urbanus apud Eusebium Eccl. Hist. lib. v. c. 16.—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
 190 Serapio Antioch. apud Eusebium Hist. Eccl. lib. vi. c. 12.—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
 190 Polycrates Ephes. apud Eusebium Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 24.—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
 192 Clementis Alex. Paedag. lib. i. c. 6.—p. 341, Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 192 Tertulliani de Virg. Vel. c. i.—p. 889, tom. ii. Paris 1844.
 203 Minutius Felix, c. xxxviii.—p. 357, tom. iii. Paris 1844.
 220 Africanus Epist. ad Aristid.—p. 337, vol. ii. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
 220 Hippolyti c. Haeres. Noeti, s. ix.—p. 64, Routh's Scrip. Eccl. Opusc.
 230 Origen de Principiis, lib. i. s. 2.—p. 115, tom. vi. Paris 1844.

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- 247 Dionysius Alex. apud Eusebium Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 24.
—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
- 248 Cypriani Epist. ad Jubaianum, s. xv.—p. 149, tom. iii. Paris 1844.
- 250 Lucii Epist. s. iv.—p. 981, tom. iii. Paris 1842.
- 250 Novatianus de Trinitate.—p. 117, Oxford 1723.
- 250 Gregorii Neocaes. Anathematismi.—p. 42, Paris 1622.
- 250 Caius Presb. apud Eusebium Hist. Eccl. lib. v. s. 28.—p. 343, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Crescens a Certa apud S. Cyprianum.—p. 350, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Lucius a Thebeste Epist.—p. 334, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Gregorii Neocaes. Orat. Panyg. ad Origen.—p. 351, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Dionysii Roman. Epist. adv. Sabell.—p. 351, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Archelai Caschar. Disp. c. Manete.—p. 351, vol. v. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Theonae Epist. ad Lucianum. c. vii.—p. 443, vol. iii. Routh's Reliq. Sac.
- 250 Phileae Epist. ad Thmutas apud Eusebium Hist. Eccl. lib. viii. s. 10.—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
- 256 Firmiliani Ep. ad Cyprianum, s. xiii.—p. 245, Routh's Scrip. Eccl. Opusc.
- 300 Methodius de Resurrect. §§ i. ii.—p. 267, tom. xviii. Paris 1857.
- 300 Arnobius adv. Gentes, lib. i.—p. 274, Routh's Scrip. Eccl. Opusc.
- 303 Lactantius de Irâ Dei, c. i. s. 6.—p. 80, vol. vii. Paris 1844.
- 312 Chrysostomi Hom. in Mathae. Hom. xlvii.—p. 643, Pusey's Library of the Fathers.
- 315 Eusebius Caesar. Prol. ad Orat. in laud. Const.—tom. xx. Paris 1857.
- 320 Alexandri Alexand. Epist. ad Alexand. s. x.—p. 25, tom. xviii. Paris 1842.
- 325 Eustathius in Hexaem. Comm.—p. 3, London 1629.
- 326 Athanasii Festal Epp. Ep. xxxix.—Appendix, p. 137, Pusey's Library of the Fathers.

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- 340 J. Firmicus Maternus De Erro. Prof. Relig. cap. xx.—p. 1025, tom. xii. Paris 1845.
- 350 Cyrilli Hiersol. Cateches. v. s. 13.—p. 221, Paris 1842.
- 354 Hilarii Lib. de Synodis.—p. 29, tom. ix. Paris 1844.
- 366 Damasi Symbo. apud Hierony. tom. ii.—Corpus Confession, Geneve 1654.
- 368 Epiphanius adv. Haeres. lib. ii. Haer. 55. s. iii.—p. 978, tom. xli. Paris 1858.
- 368 Optatus de Schism. Donat. lib. v. s. 3.—p. 1020, tom. xi. Paris 1845.
- 370 Gregorius Nyssen. de Anima.—p. 50, tom. xlvi. Paris 1858.
- 370 Ephrem Cyrus, Rythm. ag. Disputers, lib. vi.—Pusey's Library of the Fathers.
- 370 Basilii Epist. ad Sozopolit. s. iii.—tom. xxxii. Paris 1857.
- 373 Macarii Egypt. Hom. xxxix. s. 1.—p. 762, tom. xxxiv. Paris 1860.
- 374 Ambrosius de Fide, lib. ii. c. vi.—p. 537, tom. vi. Paris 1845.
- 378 Hieronymi ad Paulam Epist. Ep. xxx. s. 6.—p. 413, tom. xx. Paris 1845.
- 385 Theophili Alex. Epis. Pasch. i. a. § vi.—p. 617, tom. vii. Galland. Vet. Patr.
- 390 Rufini Aquil. Comm. on Symb. s. xxxvi.—p. 375, tom. xxi. Paris 1849.
- 396 Augustinus de Civit. Dei, lib. xix. c. 18.—p. 348, tom. ii. Colon. 1850.
- 398 Chrysostomi Hom. in Ioan. Hom. xxi.—p. 127; Hom. xxx.—p. 174; Hom. xxxii.—p. 187, tom. xli. Paris 1859.
- 412 Cyrilli Alex. de Trinitate, c. i.—p. 1121, tom. lxxvii. Paris 1859.
- 412 Isidori Pelus. Epp. lib. iv. c. cxiv.—tom. lxxvii. Paris 1860.
- 423 Theodoreti Haer. Fab. lib. v. c. i.—p. 481. Halae 1769.
- 430 Cassianus de Incarnat. lib. vii. c. 22.—tom. i. Paris 1846.
- 434 Vincentii Lirin. Commonit. lib. ii. s. 29.—p. 677, tom. i. Paris 1846.
- 440 Salvianus de Gubern, lib. iii. s. 40.—tom. liii. Paris 1845.
- 444 Prosper.—Goode's Divine Rule, vol. iii. p. 207.

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- 483 Felix IV. de Eccl. Raven. Const.—p. 13, tom. lxxv. Paris 1847.
- 500 Fulgentius de Fide, lib. i. s. 4.—p. 675, tom. lxxv. Paris 1847.
- 535 Cosmae Indicop. Typograph. Christ. lib. vii. s. 292.—p. 374, tom. lxxxviii. Paris 1859.
- 561 Anastasius Sinait. Just. Viae Dux.—p. 100, Ingols. 1606.
- 587 Venantii Fortunati Exp. Fidei Cath. de Trinit.—p. 5867, tom. lxxxviii. Paris 1850.
- 590 Gregorius Magnus.—Goode's Divine Rule, vol. iii. p. 208.
- 636 Isidorus, Hispanl. Etymolog. lib. vi. c. i. s. 50.—tom. viii. Paris 1850.
- 700 Sergii Epist. Life of Bede.—Preface, p. xv, Church Historians.
- 730 Bedae Ven. Epist. to Ecgbert, s. xvii.—p. 663, vol. i. p. ii. Church Historians.
- 745 Bonifacius.—Cuthberto Epist. p. 143. Giles 1844.
- 770 Pauli Deacon. Ascetica, Hom. xli.—p. 1179, tom. xcv. Paris 1850.
- 804 Alcuinus adv. Haeres Felicis, §§ 57, 58.—p. 112, tom. ci. Paris 1851.
- 830 John Scotus Erigena, Hom. in Prol. S. Evang. S. Joan. lib. v.—tom. cxxi. Paris 1851.
- 830 Agabardi Epist. ad Fredegisium, s. ix.—p. 164, tom. civ. Paris 1851.
- 880 Photii Amphiloeh. Quaest. clxxxix.—Wolfii Philolog. Hamburg 1735.
- 888 Anastasii Rom. Syllogismi.—p. 680, tom. cxxix. Paris 1853.
- 1030 Othlonus Mon. de cursu Spirit. c. ix.—p. 169, tom. cxlvi. Paris 1853.
- 1044 Lanfrancus, Lib. de Corp. c. Berengarium.—p. 243, Paris 1548.
- 1060 Durandus de Corp. et Sang. Christi, pt. iv. s. 11.—p. 1391, tom. cxlix. Paris 1853.
- 1090 Roscellini Epist. ad Abelardum.—p. 198, Ed. Schmeller.
- 1090 Abelardi Epist. at Heloisam.—pp. 377, 8, tom. clxxviii. Paris 1853.
- 1100 Anselmus de Conc. Presci. Dei.—p. 528, tom. clviii. Paris 1853.

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- 1100 Alexander de Ales. de modo S. Scripturae, pt. i. Quest. i.—
tom. i. Lugduni 1515.
- 1150 Brunonis Exp. to 2 Tim. iii. 16.—p. 470, tom. cliii. Paris
1854.
- 1153 Bernardi Serm. in Cantica. Ser. lxii. s. 4.—p. 1077, tom.
clxxxiii. Paris 1854.
- 1156 Petrus Lombardus de Myst. Trinit. lib. i. s. i.—p. 13, tom.
cxc. Paris 1548.
- 1250 Thomae Aquin. Summa. Theolog. p. 1, quaest. i. art. i.—p.
459, tom. i. Paris 1841.
- 1400 John Gerson de Vita Spirit.—quoted by Cosin, vol. iii. p. 35,
Anglo-Cath. Lib.
- 1520 Luther on the Galatians, ch. i. v. 6.—Middleton.
- 1520 Ph. Melancthon, Resp. ad Clerum Col.—Bp. Cosin, vol. iii.
p. 39, Anglo-Cath. Lib.
- 1520 Erasmus on Jude iii.—Edit. 1658, November.
- 1526 Tyndale, Answer to Sir T. More.—p. 100, Parker Society's
Edit.
- 1535 Latimer, Bp., Sermon on Rom. xv. 4.—p. 59, Parker Soc.
Edit.
- 1535 Bullinger, Decades, I. Ser. i. p. 1.—p. 37, vol. i. Parker Soc.
Edit.
- 1536 Calvin's Institutes, bk. ii. ch. vi. 64.—Edinb. 1863.
- 1540 Bale, Bp., Image of Both Churches.—p. 252, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1541 Becon, Probations.—p. 319, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1550 Bradford, Pref. to Places of Artopaeus.—p. 5, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1550 Hooper, Bp., Answer to Bishop of Winchester.—p. 111, Parker
Soc. Edit.
- 1550 Philpot, Arch., Trans. of Curio's Defence.—p. 357, Parker
Soc. Edit.
- 1550 Cranmer, Archbp., Confut. of Unwritten Verities.—pp. 52, 64,
Remarks, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1550 Bacon, Nov. Org. item in Psal. xix.—Oxf. 1855.
- 1550 Coverdale on Acts ii. 5-11.—p. 394, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1560 Nowell's Catechism.—Enchirid. Theologicum, vol. ii.
- 1560 Jewell's Apol. p. i.—pp. 57, 58, Parker Soc. Edit.
- 1560 Parker, Archbp., Address to Convocation, 1572.—Goode's
Divine Rule, vol. iii. p. 345.

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- 1560 Beza on Jude iii.—Geneve 1580.
 1562 Calfhill's Answer to Martial.—p. 27, Parker Soc. Edit.
 1562 Homilies of Church of England, Homily i.
 1571 Canons.
 1571 Reformatio Legum Eccl.—Goode's Divine Rule, vol. iii. p. 344.
 1579 Whittaker, Add. appended to Disputations on Scripture.—p. 705, Parker Soc. Edit.
 1580 Fulke, Defence of the S. Scriptures, p. v.—p. 169, Parker Soc. Edit.
 1594 Hooker, Eccl. Polity, bk. ii. ch. v.—p. 207, Ed. 1821.
 1596 Overall, Convocation Book, bk. ii. c. viii.—p. 191, Anglo-Cath. Lib.
 1600 Andrewes' Serm. on Temptation of Christ.—p. 504, Anglo-Cath. Lib.
 1606 Field, of the Church.—p. 151, ch. xxii. vol. iii. Eccl. Hist. Soc. 1850.
 1619 Morton, Bp., Catholic Appeal.—lib. iii. ch. xvi. s. iii. London 1610.
 1620 Donne, Serm. clvii. on 2 Pet. iii. 13.—vol. vi. Lond. 1839.
 1620 Laud, Archbp., Conference with Fisher, § 28.—p. 180, Oxf. 1839.
 1620 Ussher, Principles of Christian Religion.—p. 5, Dublin 1843.
 1625 Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. lib. iii. c. i.
 1630 Jackson, Thos., The Eternal Truth of the Scriptures, b. i. s. 2. ch. ii.—p. 12, Oxf. 1844.
 1630 Cosin, Sermon xviii. on John xx. 9.—p. 251, vol. i. Anglo-Cath. Lib.
 1630 Hall, Old Religion, Ep. Dedictory.—p. 310, vol. xvii. Gibson's Preservative, Lond. 1849.
 1640 Hammond on 2 Tim. iii. 16, and Jude 3.—pp. 711, 847, Lond. 1861.
 1640 Reynolds' Serm. xiv. on Phil. iii. 15.—vol. v. p. 152, Lond. 1826.
 1649 Thorndike on the Right of the Church, ch. v. p. 601.—vol. i. pt. ii. Anglo-Cath. Lib.
 1650 Taylor, Dissuasive from Popery, ch. i. s. i.—Ed. 1844.
 1653 Bramhall, Answer to Milletière.—p. 49, vol. i. Anglo-Cath. Lib.

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- 1660 Barrow, Truth of the Christian Religion, Sermon. xiii.—p. 8, vol. v. Oxf. 1830.
- 1662 Pearson on the Creed, Art. i.—pp. 19, 20, Lond. 1848.
- 1670 Beveridge, Expos. of Art. VI.—p. 205, vol. ix. Lond. 1824.
- 1670 South, Sermon on Matt. v. 8.—p. 154, vol. vii. Oxf. 1823.
- 1673 Tillotson, The Rule of Faith, pt. i. s. iii. s. 8.—p. 536, vol. i. Lond. 1728.
- 1680 Bull, Primitive Tradition of the Cath. Faith, Introd.—p. 209, vol. iii. Anglo-Cath. Lib.
- 1680 Stillingfleet, Rational Account, c. ii.—p. 90. Oxf. 1844.
- 1689 Burnet, Exp. Art. VI.—p. 84, Lond. 1836.
- 1690 Patrick, Discourse on Tradition, pt. ii. s. 1.—Gibson's Pres. vol. v. Lond. 1848.
- 1698 Wilson, Sacra Privata.—pp. 110, 111, vol. v. Anglo-Cath. Libr.
- 1730 Waterland, Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, c. vii. s. 5.—p. 265, Ed. 1823.
- 1814 Van Mildert, Bampton Lect., Sermon. i.—p. 21, Oxf. 1815.

NOTE 4, p. 57.

THE Rev. E. B. Elliott in his "*Horae Apocalypticae*" quotes Gibbon's words: "The ruin of the Pagan religion is described by the Sophists as a dreadful and amazing prodigy; which covered the earth with darkness and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night." He adds the following note: "*καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅδες καὶ αἰεὶ δὲ σκοτὸς τυραννῆσει τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάλλιστα*. So Eunapius of the fourth century, in his life of Eustathius, with reference to the then imminent utter ruin of Paganism."

NOTE 5, p. 63.

"*Siquidem nihil utiliter ad salutem spiritualem praedicamus quod sacra scriptura spiritus sancte miraculo faecundata non protulerit aut intra se non contineat. Nam si quid ratione dicamus aliquando quod in dictis ejus aperte mon-*

strare aut ex ipsis probare nequimus, hoc modo per illam cognoscimus utrum set accipiendum aut respicendum.” (*Anselm, De Concordia Preseientiae Dei cum libero Arbitrio*, vol. i. p. 193.)

NOTE 6, p. 64.

“SED memento hoc pacto inaeipi tuae respondere quaestioni, ut videlicet, si quid dixerō quod maior non confirmet auctoritas, quamvis illud ratione probare videar, non alia certitudine accipiat, nisi quia interim mihi ita videtur, donec mihi melius aliquo modo revelet. Certus enim sum si quid dico quod sacrae scripturae absque dubio contradicant, quia falsum est, nec illud tenere volo, si cognovero.” (*Anselm, Cur Deus Homo*, c. xviii.)

NOTE 7, p. 66.

THE whole passage from John Scotus is so full of beauty that I give it complete. The reference, as well as the reference to the other passages quoted from the Scholastic Divines, will be found under Note 3.

“Concatenatus quippe est divinae scripturae contextus, Daedalisque diverticulis et obliquitatibus perplexus. Neque hoc Spiritus Sanctus invidiā voluit intellegendi, quod absit existimari, sed studio nostram intelligentiam exercendi, sudorisque et inventionis praemii reddendi; praemium quippe est in sacrā Scripturā laborantium pura perfectaque intelligentia. O Domine Jesus nullum aliud praemium, nullam aliam beatitudinem, nullum aliud gaudium à te postulo, nisi ut ad puram absque ullo errore fallacis theoriae verba tua quae per tuum Sanctum Spiritum inspirata sunt, intelligam. Haec est enim summa felicitatis meae, finisque perfectae est contemplationis, quoniam nihil ultra rationabilis anima etiam purissima inveniet, quia nihil ultra est. Ut enim, non alibi altius quaereris quam in verbis tuis, ita non alibi apertius inveniris quam in eis. Ibi quippe habitas et illuc quaerentes et diligentes te introducis; ibi spirituales epulas verae cognitionis electis tuis praeparas, illic transiens ministras eis.” (*Hom. in Prolog. S. Evang. S. Joan.*, lib. v.)

NOTE 8, p. 68.

REFERENCES to the principal English Divines will be found under Note 3.

NOTE 9, p. 73.

I do not give the following list as an exhaustive enumeration, but as containing the best-known Confessions :—

- 1 Fragments of a Creed in Irenaeus—lib. i. c. i.
- 2 The Creed of Origin : *περὶ ἀρχῶν*—Praefat.
- 3 Fragments of a Creed in Tertullian—De Vel. Virg.
- 4 Fragments of a Creed in Cyprian—Epist. ad Maricon.
- 5 Creed of Gregory of Neo Caesarea—Opera, p. 1, apud Gregory Nyssen, tom. iii.
- 6 The Creed of Lucian the Martyr—recorded by Athanasius, Socrates, and Hilary.
- 7 The Creed of the Apostolical Constitutions—lib. vii. c. xiii.
- 8 The Creed of Jerusalem—partly preserved in St. James' Liturgy.
- 9 The Creed of Caesarea—given by Eusebius.
- 10 The Creed of Alexandria—recorded by Socrates.
- 11 The Creed of Antioch—recorded by Cassian.
- 12 The Apostles' Creed.
- 13 The Creed of Aquileia—given by Ruffinus.
- 14 The Creed of Damasus—given by Jerome.
- 15 The Nicene Creed.
- 16 The two Creeds of Epiphanius.
- 17 Nicene Creed as completed at the Council of Constantinople.
- 18 The Athanasian Creed.
- 19 The Huguenot Confession of La Rochelle.
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